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Short story by Robert Sproat

BARRED FROM JUSTICE

PLUS: Triple Alliance • Lloyd's scandals • US oil plans

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Annie Maguire

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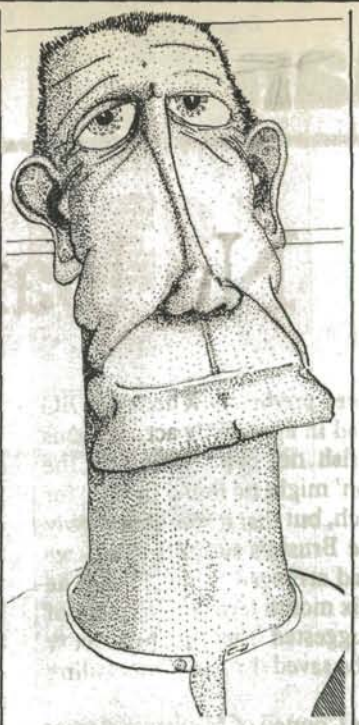

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New Statesman Vol 107 No 2780 29 June 1984

No loaf at all

AND SO IT came to pass as it had been predicted. When the EEC Athens summit last December ended in apparently acrimonious deadlock on the issue of the British net contribution to the Community, we said that a 'solution' might be found in time for the next summit in Brussels in March, but that it would probably take three months more. When the Brussels summit failed, we noted that President Mitterrand had arranged things so that he had two such meetings during his six month term as President of the Council of Ministers and suggested that he had every incentive to appear to be the man who saved the EEC from falling to pieces.

Mrs Thatcher declared war on the Council of Ministers at their meeting in Dublin Castle in November 1979. She had been preparing for the fight from the moment she became Prime Minister in May of that year. Her notions about foreign policy were at that stage still pretty sketchy, but her instinctive approach was chauvinistic. This Little England chauvinism was, of course, reinforced by her desire to contrast herself with her ardently pro-European predecessor Edward Heath.

She soon signalled how her own brand of neo-Gaullism would manifest itself. Within a week of becoming Prime Minister, she said: 'It has been suggested that I and my government will be a "soft touch" in the Community. (But) we shall judge what British interests are and we shall be resolute in defending them'. Shortly before the Dublin summit she inserted a tough passage on Britain and the EEC budget into a speech delivered in Strasbourg on 'The Obligations of Liberty'. 'Britain cannot accept the present situation on the budget. It is demonstrably unjust. It is politically indefensible. I cannot play Sister Bountiful to the Community while my own electorate are being asked to forego improvements in the fields of health, education, welfare and the rest'.

EUROPE and the EEC budget have, in short, been a major preoccupation of Mrs Thatcher for the better part of five years. Now that she is declaring that at Fontainebleau she got a 'good deal for Britain' we can score how she has done in judging British interests and defending them resolutely.

The answer is that she has done very badly. Take the narrowest point at issue, namely Britain's net contribution to the Community budget. This is the difference between what is paid over by the British authorities to the Community budget and the smaller sum that comes back into this country, mainly in the form of subsidies to farmers. It is a silly concept to be negotiating about in any case, because it implies that everything would be all right if subsidies to British farmers rose until they equalled the British outgoings to Brussels, which is political and economic nonsense.

But, even on this basis, Mrs Thatcher was forced to concede that customs duties and levies made over to Brussels should not count in the calculation, which would be made solely on the basis of VAT payments out. Far from getting back the vaunted 66 per cent of 'her loaf', under the scheme agreed this week Britain will get back only just over half of its real 'net' budget payments. That proportion of her loaf she could have had at any time since 1979, if she had adopted more subtle and effective negotiating tactics. As it is, she has expended huge amounts of political capital in Europe to very little end.

At this level of British interest, Mrs Thatcher has also conspicuously failed to get another of her declared objectives — a *permanent* solution to the British budget problem. The formula agreed this week clearly only has a life of three years or so. The Prime Minister and her faithful Foreign Secretary have been trying to put a brave gloss on this failure by saying that, when the British budget issue comes up again, we shall have the advantage of having an existing scheme in place and a right of veto over any alternative proposal. In other words we shall not be in a position of having to go cap in hand. But the plain fact is that Mrs Thatcher said again and again that she would not settle for anything other than a *permanent* mechanism. She didn't get one, but she has settled nonetheless.

THE REAL failure of Thatcherite European policy, however, has been at another and infinitely more serious level. Even if the Prime Minister had got no deal of any kind at Fontainebleau, the balance of payments cost of the Euro-budget would have been less than half of one per cent of our national income. The whole Community budget represents little more than 2½ per cent of total public spending in EEC countries.

By deliberately concentrating attention on net budget figures, Mrs Thatcher has failed to establish the *real* British interest in this whole area — namely reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. For the burden of the CAP on the economies of the Community in general and the British economy in particular is not just the £10 billion that goes each year to agricultural subsidy. It is also the £20 billion or so extra a year that consumers in the EEC have to pay for their food because they are prevented by the CAP from buying at the world market price.

Ever since Britain joined the Community, the official line has been to accept that the CAP was a financial obscenity — involving the payment of huge subsidies to produce unwanted food and huge subsidies to destroy it — but to insist that the moment would come when the Community would as a result run out of money. Then, we were always told, the British government will insist on fundamental reform as its price for agreeing to any increase in the Community's income.

That moment came and went this week at Fontainebleau. For the last five years Mrs Thatcher and her government have done precisely nothing to define British interests in this respect, let alone to defend them resolutely. The French government, which has the largest vested interest in the CAP, has had a consistent tactical line with Mrs Thatcher. It knew that, so long as she was fully engaged fighting on the less important front about the net British contribution, Mrs Thatcher would have no time for the CAP itself. The tactics were triumphantly vindicated this week. The CAP is essentially untouched and a major British national interest has gone by default.

Any serious judgement of British interests in this area since 1979 should have produced a strategy for exposing the demonstrably unjust and politically indefensible quality of the CAP, instead of beating the easy drum of the budget contribution. We shall now pay for those five years of posturing. □

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Computers do not help crime detection

TWO INTERNAL Home Office reports obtained by the *New Statesman* say that it is impossible to show that police 'criminal intelligence' computer systems have any value in fighting crime.

The reports obtained by the *New Statesman* include the initially highly confidential and critical evaluation of Britain's first-ever computerised criminal intelligence system at the Kidlington headquarters of Thames Valley Police. The controversial trial computer system, known as the 'Collator Project', was installed at Home Office expense during 1976/77. The evaluation was made in 1980 and 1981.

Local alarm has been caused by the rapid growth of personal records on the computer. An initial 33,000 personal records in 1977 quickly grew to encompass details, by December 1980, of more than 25,000 vehicles, 111,000 non-crime 'occurrences', and 135,000 people — many of them victims of crime. The total number of personal dossiers may now have reached nearly 250,000, according to internal Thames Valley Police statistics.

The evaluation report (*Home Office Scientific Research and Development Branch report no 13/82*) is blunt about the effectiveness of the computer in combatting crime: 'It is impossible to detect any change in the crime statistics that can be unambiguously attributed to the presence of this system.' No 'strong direct effect' in reducing crime has resulted from the use of the intelligence computer, it concludes, adding that if such an effect existed, 'it is unlikely it would have been overlooked'.

According to official figures, the crime detection rate in the Thames Valley area in 1975 was 45 per cent. In 1979, after the computer had been in full operation for 18 months, the detection rate was slightly poorer. The report states that the problem of assessing whether criminal intelligence computers are of any value in clearing up crime is 'intractable'.

The widespread belief among police that criminal intelligence systems help catch criminals is also debunked. Many police forces, it says, 'seem to place a great emphasis on indirect retrieval' where the computer is asked to search for some unknown person or event with specified special features. The Home Office team say that as few as 1 in 3000 crimes may have been solved in this way and only then in cases where the offender had been seen at the time of the crime. Moreover, such searches were hampered by the 'inaccuracy and incompleteness of the recorded data'.

Ironically, the new Data Protection bill currently in Parliament and due to become law before the summer recess specifically exempts such intelligence systems from controls, in the interests of 'the prevention and detection of crime'.

The report claims that putting police intelligence files on computer may actually *prevent* the police from recording unverified personal information because of concern that sensitive or potentially embarrassing data might be seen by a large number of police officers.

Thames Valley Police Authority members have now been provided with copies of the evaluation report. But they were not able to discuss the report's findings until after they had voted to buy the police a larger computer system.

Another Home Office Scientific Research and Development Department report obtained by the *New Statesman* also reveals that it is impossible to find out if such computers are useful in detecting crime. The report *The police research programme for 1984/85* says that 'quantitative measures of benefit of computers are as elusive as ever'.

Yet the document lists a number of surveillance methods designed to feed the burgeoning police computer and intelligence network: 'An area of work which has mushroomed over the last two years concerns the enhancement of signals from audio and video tapes. The audio tape laboratory at Sandridge now offers a limited operational service to police forces but is unable to cope with all demands.'

The 'automated number-plate reader project', a secret camera system which scans the number plates of cars travelling on the M1 and checks them against stolen vehicles or surveillance records on the Police National Computer is to continue operating despite adverse publicity when the *New Scientist* discovered the location of the controversial camera system, close to Luton. The report says that further development of the scanner 'is still required if the equipment is to meet the severe test of multi-lane high speed motorway traffic.'

There has recently been suspicion that the equipment may have been used to monitor the miners' vehicles. By apparent coincidence, the automatic numberplate scanning system was first installed on the Dartford Tunnel.

Duncan Campbell

Boycott relaunched

All these goods, even the Co-op pineapple juice, are on the Anti-Apartheid Movement's boycott list, relaunched this week. First declared in 1959 following a call from the African National Congress, the renewed commitment to the ban was welcomed by black and Asian groups, especially as it was timed to follow on from South African premier Botha's recent visit.

The AAM warns to watch out for a host of products which are not always clearly marked, ranging from the familiar Cape fruit and veg brands to Namibian corned beef (Armour, S&B, Bull Brand) now preferred by distributors to the Argentinian product. There are also flowers, furniture, liquor and even 'health' foods such as Noogy bars. Clothing and textiles are sold under brand names such as Miss Cassidy, Country Casuals and Rex Trueform. The Next clothing chain, claims AAM, takes much of its stock from the apartheid régime, although Next claimed this was only 5 per cent. However, the chain is being specially targeted for demonstrations by AAM's women's group. 'Contaminated by apartheid' stickers have been produced by AAM for the new campaign.

Andrew Tyler

Oxfam shops the union

OXFAM, the overseas aid charity, has refused to recognise a union which 140 of its 500 staff have so far joined.

Last year, regional staff who manage the network of Oxfam shops, wound up their staff association in favour of joining ACTSS, the clericals section of the T&GWU. Some workers at the HQ, Oxfam House, have also signed up.

The management of the charity, which expects to gross over £23m this year, has insisted on negotiating only with the separate staff association at Oxfam House, leaving regional staff completely unrepresented.

Dissatisfaction with the running of the charity and inadequate staff consultation over the recent appointment of ex-Labour minister Frank Judd, is boosting union recruitment. As one new trade unionist put it, 'In the Third World Oxfam often supports trade union work but here in Britain, it seems, it is a different story'.

Personnel director Mike Carney tried to break up a union committee meeting this month demanding to know who had given permission for Oxfam time and premises to be used. Carney made himself unpopular too, by sending out a memo which warned that when employees become related by marriage or otherwise, they should discuss the position with him.

Other areas of concern are the low salaries paid to temporary female staff, the lack of effective action on race and sex equality and the charity's policy of banking with Barclays, despite its links with South Africa. A management survey found that only 3.6 per cent of the workforce is of ethnic minority origin, while 89 per cent of women are in the lower grades.

Support for banking with Barclays is now being reconsidered by the management on both political and financial grounds, since the bank imposed interest charges of £130,000 last year. But defenders of Barclays point to the high cost of moving banks and the company's unrivalled international service.

Carney insists that Oxfam is willing to recognise the union. 'We haven't before recognised a union because we haven't before been asked', he said.

John Tanner

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Strike increases benefit cost

A LITTLE REPORTED dispute among DHSS computer staff is affecting payment of pensions and other benefits and is likely to prevent increases in benefits, announced last week, from being made on time.

Over 230 staff at the DHSS Central Office Computer Centre at Longbenton near Newcastle, the largest of its type in Europe, have been on strike since 14 May in response to management attempts to change shift arrangements. Another 170 joined the strike this week. The new arrangements would have meant a 10 per cent reduction in allowances for 46 staff.

A 24 hour permanent picket organised by the two civil service unions involved, SCPS and CPSA, has forced the DHSS to resort to emergency manual procedures. These are expensive, costing an estimated extra 21p each, and insufficient.

The computer centre has three main computers responsible for all pensions, national insurance and child benefit payment records. The strike has so far only affected pensions and national insurance related benefit but the escalation this week means that no more child benefit books will be issued.

In announcing the benefit increases due in November, secretary of state for social security Norman Fowler said in the Commons last week: 'If strike action which is being carried out by a small number of staff at the department's computer centre at Newcastle continues, then payments of higher benefits could be delayed.' But he failed to explain that there were already delays in payments

Both sides in the dispute appear to be digging in for a long fight with the management saying its offer is final and the union having escalated the action this week.

Mike Norton

Sparks fly between boards

RELATIONS between the South of Scotland Electricity Board (SSEB) and the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) have hit an all-time low because of their clash at the Sizewell B public inquiry this week. This is revealed by an internal SSEB report inadvertently given to the *New Statesman* by a public relations officer at a press conference in Glasgow last week.

The CEGB, under the leadership of its chairman Sir Walter Marshall, has championed the American-style pressurised water reactor (PWR) and is hoping to build Britain's first such station at Sizewell in Suffolk. The SSEB is an ardent supporter of the British-designed advanced gas-cooled reactor (AGR).

The internal SSEB report, dated 18 June 1984 and written by the SSEB's representative at the inquiry, K. A. Morley, describes the attitude of the CEGB legal and technical teams towards him as 'icily reserved'. The CEGB chief policy witness and board member, John Baker, is said to be 'cross' about the SSEB's evidence.

The report goes on to describe the problems the CEGB is facing at the inquiry. Mr Baker is 'yet again about to face difficulties in explaining the likely efficiency of (the) plan for clearance by CEGB of safety issues with NII (Nuclear Installations Inspectorate)'. An expert on future exchange rates, Professor J Williamson, is described as a 'very sound witness' who 'leaves CEGB with problems still on their predictions of future fossil fuel cost'.

The argument about reactor choice has been subdued over recent years, partly because of the need to present a united front to the Sizewell Inquiry. But, following an articulate submission on behalf of Norfolk County Labour Party by a former electricity board engineer in favour of the AGR, Layfield invited the SSEB to submit evidence on the economic merits of AGRs.

The CEGB has already been forced onto the defensive by the SSEB's intervention. It has attacked the SSEB's assumptions as unrealistic and naive and urged Layfield not to consider reactor choice as an issue. The SSEB is clearly seen as one of the enemy — so much so that poor Morley was not even found a desk in the CEGB's rooms at the Inquiry. For the last month or so he has been sharing an office with objectors.

Rob Edwards

Transport cash only for roads

THE GOVERNMENT is to turn the £400 million annual transport grant into a road building grant.

The transport supplementary grant is the transport equivalent of the rate support grant. It covers road building, road maintenance, public transport investments such as the Tyne and Wear metro and bus and tube subsidy. The Department of Transport has consulted the Conservative-controlled Association of County Councils over the change but not the Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

Under the proposals, due to be issued in a consultation paper later this year, the reconstruction of roads will be reclassified as road building and included in the grant. All public transport spending and minor road maintenance will have to compete with all the other council services for rate support grant.

The change represents a major switch in emphasis from transport to roads and is designed to encourage road building even when it conflicts with other council policies.

It underlines the government's policy of cutting public transport subsidies, due to be reduced by a third in the metropolitan counties over three years. It also sounds the death knell for plans like the West Midlands £500 million light rail network announced just last week.

Mike Hamer

MISCELLANY

How the force is run

Oxfordshire county councillor Julian Jacottet has obtained a copy of a secret *Masonic Directory* which names the top three men who run Thames Valley police authority. Police authority chair, Tory councillor Ron Clibbon, joined the freemasons in 1953 and is a former 'worshipful master' of the Borlese lodge, no.6216. Assistant chair Lionel Anderson, also a Tory councillor, joined the Penn and Tyler's Green Lodge, no.5876, in 1960, while the authority's treasurer, E.J. Deung, a local government officer rather than an elected member, appears to have joined his lodge in 1945. This sort of makes up for the fact that, unlike many senior police officers, Thames Valley's top copper chief constable Peter Imbert doesn't belong to the Brotherhood.

Robust scenario

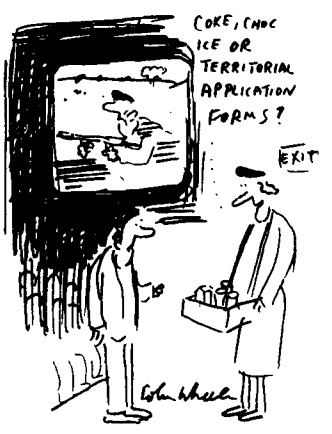
Department of silly excuses. On 11 May we showed a photograph of a policeman in a rough and tumble with miners at Wivenhoe, an Essex port used for importing coal. We pointed out that he wasn't wearing any identification number. An intrepid reader promptly wrote to the police authority asking why. The chairperson of the authority, Geoffrey Waterer with lots of letters after his name, replied that the police were wearing anoraks because of the 'inclement weather' and that these have epaulettes held in position by means of Velcro: 'Four locally based officers lost their epaulettes in robust situations and other officers, on seeing this, instinctively removed theirs and placed them in their pockets for safe-keeping.' But so concerned is he that a small working party has been set up to 'research the problem' and 'in the meantime officers will be instructed to affix their epaulettes whenever anoraks are worn'. Another famous victory for the *New Statesman*.

Motorism

Nicholas Ridley, the Secretary of State for Transport, is possibly the only person alive to be more keen on motoring than Mr Toad. Talking to the Bow Group earlier this month he said: 'If people want to commute into London, who am I to say they shouldn't? If we believe in consumer choice, in individual freedom, why pillory drivers on the dreadful offence of congestion?' He continued: 'More than 60 per cent of families own a car. They are expensive. People are proud of them — they love them. They are highly valued. I make no apologies for being pro-motorist — the motorist is an individual and he (sic) likes being a motorist because he can exercise his individual freedom of choice. That is a good thing. He should not be hampered by petty rules and unneccessary restrictions on his liberty. He also has 30 million votes.' Note: the Department of Transport has 26 million licence holders on its books (many of whom do not have cars). If he is referring to the 36 million records that the department has then that includes the disqualified and the dead.

Blue Leader's Falklands

After those *Daily Mail* tantrums about mind-rotting 'peace studies' in schools, the Defence Ministry is currently demonstrating the correct way to sell a product — in its case the armed forces, pride therein. The classroom's all right for past participles but for the really serious stuff you look to the movies. You take a hot film like *Breakdance* that's attracting a nine to 16 year old multi-racial crowd and put on with it a half hour of dramatised gunslinging, set in the Falklands, in which every Brit has his own Harrier jumpjet and/or gets to machinegun lots of Argies. *Blue Leader Missing* is one of a pair of MoD recruitment shorts going out in the 150 cinemas — most of them Classics — now showing *Breakdance*. The other, also in the new 'acted out' mode, is a Territorial Army plug called *One Of Us*. Both are made for the MoD by a little known Wardour Street outfit called Roymark which made its first crust from advertising and medical shorts. An earlier Falklands propoganda short it made called *Firefight* went out with the last Bond movie, while an item about Chinese fleeing the horrid mainland to Hong Kong accompanied *Endless Summer*. Over to you, CND.



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TUC leadership tussle — contest or no contest?

Both photos: David Fowler

The contestants: David Lea, with his eye on the media and (right) Norman Willis with the big guns of the TGWU

RUSTY democratic procedures are creaking into action for the TUC's first ever contested election for its general secretary. The vacancy caused by Len Murray's early retirement coincides with new moves to extend union efforts to consult their members. But the election appears to have already been decided in the traditional 'smoke-filled rooms'. And the only contestants are Congress House insiders.

Although the TUC only invited nominations for the post this week, Norman Willis, currently number two at the TUC, secured the backing of Britain's largest union, the Transport and General (TGWU) a month ago. His challenger, David Lea, currently number three at Congress House, is already trailing badly, despite confidently predicting that he will win the backing of the next two largest unions, the General and Municipal (GMB) and the engineers (AUEW).

Because the left-led TGWU came out for Willis, Lea automatically earned the right-wing label, but Willis's election campaign has scored potentially decisive points by attracting major right-wing unions like the shopworkers (USDAW) and the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union. Non-Labour Party affiliated NALGO is also expected to back Willis at its executive meeting next month. Lea's only counter-coup has been the decision of the left-controlled executive of the civil service union CPSA to circulate its 900 branches with a statement by each candidate for 'discussion'.

Willis now has the backing of unions with membership totalling 3.25 million (including NALGO), with Lea only just behind at 2.9 million if the AUEW, GMB and right-wing electricians (EETPU) are included. But the uncommitted unions are dominated by three big left-wing unions, NUPE, ASTMS and the mineworkers, with a combined membership of 1.3 million. The contest will be decided at a vote during September's Congress.

Lea has adopted a more aggressive, media-conscious approach to the campaign (for example, appearing on Granada's *Union World* programme whereas Willis turned down the invitation), and has vigorously defended Len Murray's 'new realism'.

Too late to influence the range of candidates, a move for a broader franchise has emerged. Apart from the CPSA decision, the right-wing steelworkers' union ISTC has called for all TUC union members (about 10 million) to be balloted on the general secretaryship. Most unions are likely to reject this option, as the candidates are little known.

And the Labour Party pressure group, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, has called for five-yearly elections (under current rules the general secretary retires at 65) and 'broader consultation'.

John Rentoul

Update

Minibuses rejected

THE GOVERNMENT has rejected a plan to flood London's streets with minibuses.

Associated Minibus Operators (AMOS) had wanted to run 500 minibuses in central London. The man behind the scheme, Anthony Shephard, was co-author of the right-wing Adam Smith Institute report on transport. He was also instrumental in legalising minibuses in Hong Kong in the late 1960s. (*NS* 25 Feb 1983 and 18 March 1983).

The inspector, who held a public inquiry into the AMOS plan earlier this year, Sir Stephen Berthon, says in his report 'the indications to me are that AMOS as a company lacks credibility and is not a reliable organisation to whom (*sic*) should be entrusted the introduction of a new private bus operation which could set an important precedent for the future'. The inspector recommended rejecting the plan. And transport secretary Nicholas Ridley agreed.

Defining Met crime

NEVER HAS a crime statistic been more crucial than when Sir Kenneth Newman, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, was able to report a drop of 4 per cent in recorded crime in his area. Public disquiet about the behaviour and policies of his officers was substantiated by the massive Policy Studies Institute report, published last year, and exacerbated by incidents like the 'pistol-whipping' of Steven Waldorf who had been shot by mistake. As Newman's report, published last week, makes clear, the Met had to be seen to be changing and 'change was the pre-condition of achievement'.

Yet how real is the achievement? There had been a reduction in all categories of crime 'except crimes against the person' — the type which people care most about. Taken together, crimes of violence against the person and sexual offences increased between 1982 and 1983 from 19,735 to 20,657 — an increase of 4.6 per cent. Within this, however, murder — the most variable crime statistic — is down from 193 to 149 while rape is up from 285 to 317.

This raises the question of what the statistics actually measure — crimes known to the police and recorded by them as crime. In crimes of violence against the person — including sexual — the largest single number are carried out by persons known to the victim where non-reporting is particularly likely. In crimes of theft — by burglary, or robbery — the degree of reporting depends on two factors: does the victim feel it is worthwhile and do they need to report it in order to claim insurance.

The falls in burglary of 3.8 per cent (159,753 to 153,620) and in robbery of 3.6 per cent (12,498 to 12,037) are welcome. But is this simply a drop in the number of people who think it worthwhile to inform the police? According to the British Insurance Association, claims for stolen property continued to rise last year. This was both in the value of the claims (£275 million for burglaries, a rise of 17 per cent, partly due to the popularity of videos) but also in terms of numbers. A spokesperson for the BIA told the *New Statesman* that London was no exception to this trend and indeed the increase tended to be higher in inner-city London, as demonstrated by rising insurance rates. What the robbery and burglary figures may show, therefore, is that among those people whose property is not insured — estimated at 25 per cent of households — there has been a fall in the number who think it worthwhile to report the crime.

The clear-up rate for arbitrary theft is still lower in the Met than in any other police force. From Newman's report it seems clear that he sees no point in putting more resources into catching such thieves. Rather, he is anxious to develop the 'contract' between public and police in which all citizens and all agencies share responsibility for 'crime prevention'. He stresses the importance of consultative forums between police and people but makes no mention of the fact that the Met is the only British police force not to be subject to a democratic police authority.

Sarah Benton

Voters favour one party rule

A COALITION government between Labour and the Liberal/SDP Alliance — the dream of advocates of a 'rainbow pact' among the anti-Conservative parties — is the public's *least* favoured form of government, according to Marplan poll conducted this month.

Details of the poll, commissioned by Channel 4's *A Week in Politics*, are disclosed here for the first time. Marplan's sample of 1,434 electors throughout Britain were asked: 'Which of these forms of government would you most like to see ruling Britain?' Six options were offered. The results below show that more than twice as many people favour single-party government as favour coalitions:

Labour ruling on its own	26%
Conservative ruling on its own	25%
All-party coalition	14%
Alliance ruling on its own	13%
Con-Alliance coalition	8%
Lab-Alliance coalition	6%
Don't know	7%

Among Labour and Conservative voters, single-party rule by their own party is the favoured method of government by seven out of ten people. However, only 55 per cent of Alliance voters want a Liberal/SDP government ruling on its own, while 22 per cent favour an all-party coalition. Their support for either a Labour-Alliance coalition (7 per cent) or a Conservative-Alliance coalition (11 per cent) is surprisingly weak.

As the *Guardian* reported last Friday (22 June), the answers to the conventional voting intention question appear to show a large anti-Conservative majority, with 37 per cent saying they would vote Tory and 61 per cent anti-Tory (38 per cent Labour, 23 per cent Alliance). However, electors seem evenly divided as to whether they want a right-of-centre or left-of-centre government. Marplan asked not only what electors' first government preferences were, but also for their second and third preferences. When the second and, where necessary, third choices of those who initially chose 'fence-sitting' options (Alliance or all-party government) are counted, the overall preferences between left and right are:

Labour on its own	29%
Labour-Alliance coalition	16%
Total left-of-centre	45%
Conservative on its own	28%
Conservative-Alliance coalition	16%
Total right-of-centre	44%
Don't know	11%

Peter Kellner

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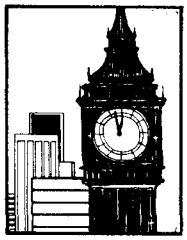

PETER KELLNER Political Editor

The Queen and Eton versus Mrs Thatcher's upstarts

AMONG THE talking classes one point of discussion has dominated all others for the past ten days; unfortunately, out of respect for the libel laws and disrespect for the editor of the *Mail on Sunday*, this column will keep clear of the gutter until proof or a resignation, preferably both, are provided. (Would *you* trust gossip based on the efforts of the man who 'discovered' Martin Bormann and was taken in by the Leyland slush-fund forgeries? He may be right this time, but the prudent voyeur will wait and see.)

Still, we have not been short of things to ponder. Perhaps the greatest fun, while it lasted, was the Queen's 'alarm signals' which she was said to have sent Mrs Thatcher over the miners' dispute. For 48 hours it looked as if we might have a splendid constitutional dust-up on our hands — one, moreover, in which the hereditary monarch was in the right and her elected first minister in the wrong.

On Tuesday of last week the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* reported that:

> The Queen has been shocked by the clashes between miners and the police. She has been particularly upset by television news coverage of the violent scenes.

That story appeared under the headline 'Royal concern grows'. The following day the *Sun* upped the ante by repeating the story but giving it the more eye-catching headline 'Queen's shock at rioting'. Then, on Thursday, the *Sun* went to town on the follow-up. Under an 'exclusive' tag and a six column headline, 'Mrs T rejects Queen's fear of clashes', it reported the Prime Minister's retort:

> An irritated Mrs Thatcher has rejected point blank the Queen's implied criticism of her handling of the pit war. The Prime Minister is far from happy that Her Majesty has let her 'alarm' become known publicly. One top Tory said the Queen was 'hardly the fount of all political wisdom'. And another Cabinet Minister described the Queen as 'a typical Grade Three *Telegraph* reader', implying that she has soft right-wing views.

The story had all the makings of a quite delicious sensation, bringing to a head and out into the open ten years of frosty dealings between the Queen and Mrs Thatcher. But then, quite suddenly, the story disappeared. Sadly, it was not true. Or, rather, the bit about the Queen's 'implied criticism' of the government's policy on the coal strike was not true. A stray, and perfectly ordinary, remark of shock about television film of scenes at the Orgreave coking plant had been passed at second, or possibly third or fourth hand, to the *Telegraph*'s political correspondent.

From there the *Sun*, knowing a circulation-grabbing tale when it sees one, took off, inflating a chance remark into a constitutional battle. But, to do the *Sun* credit, the second half of the story is true. Ministers were upset by what they thought to be the Queen's criticisms. She regards most ministers — at any rate, they *think* she regards them — as uncouth johnny-come-latelies without proper standards or respect for national traditions; while they regard her as a symbol of the landed, patrician gentry that Mrs Thatcher's brand of conservatism so despises. The battle, as described by the *Sun* last week, may not have taken place; but the underlying rivalry is real enough.

WHICH BRINGS US to another front in the war between the patricians and the upstarts among the Tory ranks. This week Francis Pym's book, *The Politics of Consent*, has been published[1]. It is his attempt to define the 'wet' criticisms of Mrs Thatcher's government, and wave 'the flag of traditional conservatism' in the hope that 'one day a standard-bearer can pick it up and put it back at the centre of our affairs, where it belongs'.

Anyone reading the book expecting an intellectually coherent attack on monetarism, or an alternative ideology to Thatcherism, will be disappointed. At few points does Mr Pym provide a connected argument, showing how his conclusions flow logically from his premises. Instead it reads like a better-written, right-of-centre version of a series of composited Labour Party conference resolutions.

Those familiar with the genre will recognise the format: seven reasons why the present situation is intolerable, together with five immediate and non-negotiable demands. No attempt to provide connections, trade-offs or priorities: just list after list. Leaving aside countless two- and three-part lists, Mr Pym's book offers: ten achievements of the Thatcher government, four defence options, seven considerations governing East-West relations, four duties of MPs, four steps for reforming the welfare state, five properties of monetarism, 12 consequences of monetarism, a six-point alternative, five implications of the technological revolution and four lessons to be learned by the Conservative Party.

Mr Pym's is a simple-minded world in which the obvious virtues of his approach to politics have been squashed by the obvious idiocies of the present government. Assertion is sufficient to make the point, proof unnecessary. If you look for academic, or theoretical, or philosophical references you will look in vain. Mr Pym's book contains no index, bibliography or footnotes. The publishers cannot plead that such an exercise would have stretched their resources. I reckon I could do all three in a morning.

Compare that with the other, and far more substantial, wet critique of Thatcherism by a sacked cabinet minister, Sir Ian Gilmour's *Britain can work*[2]. This contains a seven-page index, a 12-page bibliography, and 606 footnotes. That does not mean Sir Ian is right, or even particularly clever. Books with copious footnotes are capable of providing quite spectacular garbage. But anyone reading Sir Ian's book will come away acknowledging that he has devoted considerable intellectual effort to his task. Nobody reading *The Politics of Consent* could gain that impression about Mr Pym.

Yet it is Mr Pym's book that is likely to have the more lasting impact — and not just because his cabinet career lasted longer and reached higher than Sir Ian's. It is because Mr Pym's aversion to theory and ideology, and even to sustained intellectual effort, speaks more to the audience that might, one day, reclaim the Conservative Party. Sir Ian invokes Keynes, Schumpeter and Popper in his quest for a better Conservatism; Mr Pym trades in style, paternalism and stability. Intentionally or not, Mr Pym has judged his audience better.

What does that audience comprise? The general answer is those Conservatives who grew restless when unemployment doubled to three million, went quiet over the Falklands, and have begun to grow queasy again as the ratings of Mrs Thatcher and her ministers slip once more in the polls. There is, however, a more specific answer. While we are familiar with the class war that the present government has waged against working people and the trade unions, we should not underestimate the importance of Mrs Thatcher's other class war — against the traditional landowning Tories, whose conventional route into politics has always been via Eton.

When Mrs Thatcher first became Prime Minister she had six old Etonians in her cabinet. Five of them have now gone — David Howell and Lords Soames and Carrington, as well as Francis Pym and Sir Ian Gilmour. Of that original sextet only Lord Hailsham remains, and he cannot have long to go. One does not need to be sentimental about Eton to see in what has happened a symbol of the social upheaval — ironically begun by Edward Heath — that Mrs Thatcher has carried through in the Conservative leadership. She has cast into outer darkness not just those five old Etonians, but the decent, paternalistic, old-fashioned, anti-intellectual qualities of their class — the real 'grade three *Telegraph* readers'. One day they will fight back, and Mr Pym, unlike Sir Ian Gilmour, has provided them with ammunition they will understand. □

1. Published by Hamish Hamilton, £8.95.
2. Published by Martin Robertson, £8.95.

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A system of injustice

Bob Woffinden examines a series of cases which show how the Home Office, the legal system and the police obstruct investigations of miscarriages of justice

FEW INJUSTICES in the heart of the political system cause such fear and distress as the imprisonment of innocent people. The possibility that you can not only be arrested for and convicted of a crime you never committed is alarming enough. As the Ombudsman Sir Cecil Clothier said, the imprisonment of the innocent is 'one of the gravest matters which can occupy the attention of a civilised society.' Yet what gives a deplorable series of mistakes and incompetence a nightmare quality is when the very State office charged with righting such wrongs knowingly does nothing about them.

Tom Sargent, former secretary of Justice, the law reform group, has estimated that 200-300 cases a year raise sufficient doubts to merit thorough reinvestigation. In recent months, the *New Statesman* has examined three cases of wrongful conviction: Paul Cleeland (*NS* 5 August 1983); Annie Maguire *et al* (*NS* 9 March 1984) and John McComb (*NS* 16 March 1984). There are many others currently causing concern, including those highlighted by the BBC1 series, *Rough Justice*.

Far from seeing the redressing of wrongs as an urgent priority, the political and legal establishment has developed an intricate web of obstructive procedures designed to pervert the course of retrospective justice and almost eliminate the need to admit publicly to fault in the system. Sir David Napley told the House of Commons select committee on Home Affairs in 1982 that he 'could not recall a single case where the Home Office, as a result of its own investigations, felt able to recommend a pardon or any other recognition that a conviction was necessarily wrongful'.

In practice, therefore, miscarriages of justice are remedied, if at all, through the relentless application of outside public pressure. 'Unless you have an MP who is very determined, an organisation like Justice or the NCCL campaigning for you, great family support and intense publicity to force your file to the top of the pile, you have no chance of getting your case referred', commented Jonathan Caplan, a member of the Criminal Bar Assocation, who collaborated with Christopher Price on a book about the Maxwell Confait murder trial.

The corollary of this, as the Commons select committee noted, is that 'the chances of a petition ultimately being successful might sometimes depend less on its intrinsic merits than on the amount of external support and publicity that it was able to attract.'

THE LEGAL procedure for rectifying errors in the administration of justice was established in the wake of the Timothy Evans affair. Evans was hanged in 1950 and pardoned in 1966 and it was the first time in the entire history of British justice that the powers that be were obliged to admit that they'd executed the wrong man (we cannot assume that it was the first time it had happened). Section 17 of the 1968 Criminal Appeals Act stipulated that if the ordinary judicial appeals system had been exhausted, but that doubts about a particular case nevertheless remained, the Home Secretary was empowered either to refer it back to the Court of Appeal, or simply to grant a pardon.

However, Section 17 has never had its desired effect. Over the years, both the Home Office and the judiciary have proved equally adept at thwarting the wishes of Parliament in this matter. For example pardons are rarely granted. The official explanation for this is that Home Secretaries would deem it constitutionally improper, as a breach of the supposed separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary (although this, of course, is precisely what was envisaged in the 1968 Act).

No institution in British political life is charged specifically with the duty to ensure standards of justice are upheld. The Lord Chancellor, the Attorney General and the Home Office all hold some responsibility for making sure justice is seen to be done. But the paralysis at best and obstruction of justice at worst is most acute in the Home Office. Intractably conservative and habitually secretive, the Home Office is a prisoner of too many conflicting, vested interests to be able to expedite the process of reviewing someone's case. The Home Office will, therefore, avoid initiatives which are unsympathetic to those interests — whether police, prison officers, or courts — or which erode public confidence in the institutions.

The sifting of such petitions is actually the concern of C5 division of the Criminal Justice Department at the Home Office. C5 operates at a tortoise pace, when a case hasn't drifted into hibernation. A staff of 12 deals with over 2,000 petitions annually. (Approximately half of these fall immediately, either for want of fresh evidence, or because the normal judicial procedure has not yet been exhausted. Of the rest, the majority are appeals against less serious convictions — e.g. motoring offences.)

C5 does no field work itself, relying instead on the police to carry out its investigations. The police are hardly going to be enthusiastic about probing shortcomings in the work of their colleagues. Peter Hill, producer of *Rough Justice*, recalled that British Transport Police were completely uninterested in his reinvestigation of the John Walters indecent assault case. 'It was hard work just to persuade them to pick up a pen and paper and take down the address of the victim.' After another of the *Rough Justice* programmes, local police visited two crucial witnesses, frightening one and threatening the other with 'eight years' imprisonment for perjury'. Examples of administrative cover-ups in miscarriage cases are not hard to find. A feature common to two current unresolved cases — Michael Hickey and Paul Cleeland — is the mysterious disappearance of crucial official documents.

EVEN ASIDE from all this, however, two aspects of the Home Office procedure run counter to British legal conventions. In the first place, justice isn't seen to be done: C5 explains neither its lengthy delays, nor its eventual decisions. Secondly, those already found guilty virtually have to prove their innocence — rarely an easy undertaking — which Home Office officials admit is a 'reverse onus'.

In those rare cases when a petition is referred back to the appeal court, the problems of a wrongly convicted prisoner are not over. He is in effect re-submitting his case to the same legal process which has already failed him. 'The appeal court has to perform this feat of mental gymnastics, substituting itself for the jury,' explained Caplan. 'If fresh evidence is to be heard, you can never tell what effect this might have had on the jury at the original trial, because you never know *why* a jury convicts.'

The Luton post office murder provides the most telling example of the inadequacy of the system. In March 1970, Patrick Murphy, Michael McMahon and David Cooper were sentenced together to life imprisonment, the prosecution case having been based almost entirely on the testimony of a fourth man,

New Statesman

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Leicester News Service

Michael Hickey protests his innocence from the rooftop of Gartree prison

Alfred Matthews. In December 1972, Murphy's conviction was quashed, and Matthews's evidence rejected. This automatically undermined the whole case against McMahon and Cooper. Yet they remained in prison a further eight years until 1980, when the publication of Ludovic Kennedy's book about the injustice precipitated their release. The appeal court heard the case on five separate occasions and had behaved, according to Caplan, 'in a quite incomprehensible manner'.

This inability of the appeal court to hold a thorough review of a case comes from its *lack* of independence from the Home Office. The court considers only those aspects of a case which have been specifically mentioned in the Home Secretary's letter of reference. Since the letter is traditionally brief, this automatically limits a petitioner's chances of success. The judiciary has effectively contravened both the spirit and the letter of parliamentary legislation in order to maintain a façade of infallibility in the legal process.

Such determination to avoid confessing to flaws was apparent in the 1977 Fisher report into the Confait murder and the 1982 Hunter report into the Patrick Meehan case. Both attempted to buttress the original trial verdicts, even though they were by then widely held to be indefensible. (In the former case, it meant that the defendants virtually had to be cleared twice over.) Similarly, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, when freeing and quashing the conviction of Mervyn Russell — the subject of the very first *Rough Justice* investigation — in December 1983, referred to 'the very strong prosecution case against this man'. In the circumstances, this was a wholly illogical remark. (Had the prosecution case not been completely demolished, Russell would doubtless still be in prison.)

MANY OF THE myriad obstacles placed in the path of those attempting to secure belated justice were brought to light in the Ombudsman report into the John Preece affair, published earlier this year. Through his MP, Jack Ashley, Preece had complained of excessive administrative delay in the review of his conviction for murder. Although Dr Alan Clift, the forensic scientist who gave evidence at his trial, was suspended from duty on the grounds of incompetence in September 1977, Preece's conviction wasn't quashed until June 1981.

Shortly after Clift's suspension, an internal minute had recognised that 'the Home Office must take some initiative to establish the full range of the implications of Clift's actions in past cases'. Such an untypically candid call for action was soon suffocated. Two senior Home Office officials — the Deputy Under-Secretary concerned and the Assistant Under-Secretary in charge of the Criminal Justice Department — ignored both a damning report on the standard of Clift's work, and the openly expressed view of the Chief Constable of Cumbria that Clift's evidence had formed the 'bulwark of the Prosecution's case' at Preece's 1973 trial. In due course, they decided that there was 'no onus [on the Home Office] to take the initiative' in determining whether or not Clift's work had influenced the outcome of any criminal proceedings. Preece was ultimately set free only because his tenacious solicitors battled against bureaucratic prevarication for over three years.

In the course of his investigation, the Ombudsman uncovered two particularly remarkable details. The re-examination of the scientific evidence was delayed for some time because the trial exhibits were *in Dr Clift's personal possession.* (Such material is deemed to be the property of the Crown.) Secondly, a detailed report on the quality of the evidence was prepared by the Regional Procurator Fiscal of Hamilton. He concluded that attempts to re-open the case 'should continue to be resisted'. Perhaps this wasn't surprising. After all, at the trial itself, he had been *one of the prosecuting counsel.*

The appeal court judges who quashed Preece's conviction recorded that Clift had been discredited 'not only as a scientist but as a witness'. Nevertheless, the Home Office *still* refused to acknowledge that they were obligated to look afresh at all of Clift's cases. They were eventually forced to do so only because of the determination of a solitary MP — Jack Ashley — and because it was learned that Peter Cobb, the director of the Wetherby laboratory, had on his own initiative instructed that all of Clift's past files should be retained.

Although parliamentary campaigns for those wrongfully imprisoned are conducted by individual MPs, there have been enough of them to create a party political issue. Yet although Ombudsman Sir Cecil Clothier's blistering attack — described by Patrick O'Connor, of the Haldane Society, as 'dynamite' — provided Labour with a clear opportunity to embarrass the government, only Ashley pursued the matter in Parliament. For the Labour Party in Parliament it remains a matter of individual cases, in part because the wheels of Home Office justice turn as slowly whether there is a Conservative or Labour government, in part because the PLP has no fundamentally radical notion of how the State *should* function.

More effective pressure to reform the procedure has come instead from an unexpected source: the BBC, through Peter Hill and Martin Young's exemplary series,

Some blatant cases

Paul Cleeland: found guilty of murder in Stevenage in June 1973. Among those campaigning to establish his innocence has been SDP President Shirley Williams, until 1979 a local MP. See *The Times* (21 April 1982); also *New Statesman* 5 August 1983.

George Beattie: found guilty of murder in Glasgow in 1973. Case analysed by *Rough Justice* (Nov. 1983).

Annie Maguire *et al*: convicted of terrorist offences following the Guildford pub bombings in 1974. Lord Fitt among those campaigning on their behalf. Case examined by *Panorama* (BBC, April 1983) and *First Tuesday* (YTV, March 1984).

Margaret Livesey: convicted of the murder of her 14-year-old son at Preston in 1979. Case analysed by *Rough Justice* (Oct. 1983).

Michael Hickey *et al:* convicted of murder of 14-year-old Carl Bridgewater in Nov. 1979. Case regularly in the news, largely because of campaign being fought by Hickey's mother, Anne Whelan. Long rooftop protest by Hickey at Gartree prison earlier this year. Deputy Labour leader and local MP Roy Hattersley among those sympathetic. Paul Foot currently writing a book about the case.

Mohinder Singh: found guilty of murder in Dec 1979. Case dismissed at the appeal court. Analysed in the book *Rough Justice* (Ariel).

Ernie Clarke: found guilty of murder in South Shields in 1979. Case examined in *Rough Justice* (Oct. 1983).

Bruce Lee: found guilty of arson and murder at Hull in Jan. 1981. *Sunday Times* has since fought to prove his innocence. In Dec. 1983 Lee was cleared of some of the crimes by an appeal court.

John McComb: convicted of conspiracy to cause explosions in May 1983. See *NS* 16 March.

Dennis Kelly: sentenced to life imprisonment in Liverpool in June 1983. Friends and press launched an immediate campaign to release him. Case dismissed at appeal court Mar. 1984.

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Rough Justice. 'In the beginning the Home Office thought it was just another TV programme', recalled Hill. 'It took a little while for it to sink in that we actually did our homework.'

The report of the Commons home affairs committee, published in October 1982, endorsed the call made previously by Justice (back in 1968) and by Lord Devlin (in a 1976 report) for an independent review body to replace the discredited Section 17 procedure. The body would consist of up to a dozen members, some of whom would be criminal lawyers, who could examine cases as they saw fit. It would be of an extra-judicial nature, and would make recommendations direct to the Home Secretary.

The Home Office did not respond to the select committee, other than to agree to be prepared to refer cases back to the appeal court 'more readily'. Despite being pressed on the matter by Justice, both the Home Office itself and Lord Lane declined to elaborate on what, in practice, 'more readily' actually meant. Nor was the Home Office able to provide the *New Statesman* with any examples of this fresh approach in operation.

However, the accumulating pressure did force one significant concession. In November 1983 the House of Lords categorically ruled that the narrow interpretation placed by the appeal court on the 1956 and 1968 legislation was, in Lord Diplock's word, 'wrong'. On appeal, 'the whole of the case' must be examined. The ruling therefore confirmed what many had long suspected: that the appeal court had been artificially circumscribing its own powers for the previous 27 years.

There is little doubt that the Law Lords, who had the select committee report to hand, had been influenced by policy pressure and the need to try to assuage mounting public and parliamentary concern. However, the new ruling, important though it is, has yet had no practical results, and in any case has arrived too late to make the present system tolerable. As the Ombudsman report has now shown, visceral change is required.

Until it arrives, the cries of those calling, simply, for justice will remain unheeded. Take the case of Michael Hickey *et al*: as far back as 1980, *Guardian* reporter Aileen Ballentyne, whose full-page article first revealed this miscarriage of justice, received a citation for her investigation of the case. The innocent men remain in prison. In the meantime, both the appeal court (in 1981) and a police inquiry, headed by James Ridgeway, assistant chief constable of Greater Manchester, (in 1983) have failed to find grounds to set aside the convictions.

Or take the case of Margaret Livesey, the subject of a *Rough Justice* programme in October 1983. Here is another human tragedy. Not only was her son brutally murdered, but she herself was convicted of the crime. *Rough Justice* demonstrated her innocence to approximately ten million people. She remains in prison. A police enquiry set up seven months ago has still not delivered its report to the Home Office. □

Bob Woffinden is currently researching a book about miscarriages of justice to be published next year by New English Library. Anyone who can offer him relevant information can contact him via the New Statesman *or on 01-254 5604.*

IRELAND

After the Forum

Is Mrs Thatcher interested in progress, asks Mary Holland

LAST SUNDAY an opinion poll carried out for a Dublin newspaper revealed that 66 per cent of Irish people think that Mrs Thatcher is making a good job of running Britain. There are those who think the poll was a cunning plot designed by Dr Garret FitzGerald to charm Mrs Thatcher and to put her in an amiable mood for next Monday's House of Commons debate on Northern Ireland.

Although the Prime Minister has already indicated that she will not take part, the debate is being awaited with the utmost anxiety in Dublin. This is because it is expected to give the first clear signal as to whether the British government is prepared to go for a radical shift of policy in Northern Ireland, or simply to carry on with more of the same.

Since the New Ireland Forum report was published two months ago, all speculation in Britain and abroad about the government's response has come down to one crucial question: will Mrs Thatcher decide to tackle the Irish problem or not? The concentration on her personal involvement is almost frightening. After all the Irish problem has been around for a good few centuries now, yet on both sides of the Irish Sea officials tend to give the impression that, if only Mrs Thatcher's sympathy could be positively engaged, they could sort the whole thing out in a matter of months, albeit at the risk of a few hundred lives.

What is clear is that no new initiative will happen without her backing. Mr Prior has indicated that he would like to have one last go at achieving political progress on the basis of joint action between Dublin and London, but that he will only act if he has her open, unequivocal support. An article published in the *Boston Globe* last month pinpointed the quite valid reasons for this, which go far beyond Prior's own political future and his relationship with the Prime Minister. A senior British official 'intimate with Prior's thinking' was quoted as saying: 'The only way that progress will be made in Northern Ireland is if Mrs Thatcher herself takes the lead. That's the only way we can do it, because that's the only way we can hold the Unionist parties and the right wing of the Conservative Party together'.

There is some anxiety in Dublin now that the results of the European elections in Northern Ireland will prove a further obstacle to persuading Mrs Thatcher to take on the risks involved in any radical action. On the one hand John Hume, the SDLP leader, won a handsome victory over Sinn Fein's Danny Morrison, giving the lie at least in the short term to the fear that the entire Catholic community is on the verge of throwing its voting support behind the IRA. For nearly two years now people have been advising the Prime Minister that the main reason for urgent action in Northern Ireland is to halt the onward march of Sinn Fein and this result may cause her to think that this march has already been halted.

As it turned out the much more alarming result came in the shape of 230,000 votes cast for the Rev Ian Paisley. Over the past 15 years any British ambitions to solve the Northern Irish problem by an equitable political settlement have foundered on the rock of Protestant opposition. In recent months, the hope had grown, with considerable evidence to back it up, that sections of the Unionist community were in a mood for compromise. It has been a major element in Mr Prior's calculations that the Protestant community as a whole is more relaxed than it has been for a long time. In the last two elections — for the Assembly in 1982 and for Westminster last year — the vote for Dr Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party had declined and British officials made no secret of their hopes that this trend might continue. Instead Paisley pulled in a staggering 33.6 per cent of the total votes cast in the province. It would be very difficult to interpret this as anything other than a massive Protestant 'No' to Sinn Fein, the Forum and anything which seems to threaten closer links with the Republic.

YET MR PRIOR knows, or should do by now, that in Northern Ireland the expression of tribal loyalties at the ballot box is not always the complete guide to the communal mood. On both sides, the high support for both Hume and Paisley was mainly about one thing: repelling Sinn Fein. Hume's success was due at least in part to the fact that middle-class sections of the Catholic community do see a faint hope that what Mr Prior has described as 'a window of opportunity' may exist for political progress. They rallied to the Catholic leader who seemed to offer that hope. But Hume knows that this is his last throw, that there is no way his party can keep the support of the Catholic community unless Westminster delivers something tangible this time.

For the past few months, officials in London and Dublin have been discussing the shape of a possible political package which could provide the basis of joint action on Northern Ireland. It would stop short of any change in the constitutional status of the province but would involve both governments acting together on a whole range of issues in the administration of the North. Inevitably, much of the emphasis would be on security arrangements, but it would also include joint action on a whole range of economic and planning issues. At the moment the vogue word is 'harmonisation' of various policies affecting North and South, for example in energy and agriculture.

This is not to suggest that the two sides are in agreement and that all that is needed is Mrs Thatcher's imprimatur. On the contrary, there is still a lot of hard bargaining to be done. But Mr Prior, like Dr FitzGerald, believes that both governments should now be working to a very tight deadline. Ideally, both men would like to obtain a clear commitment from Mrs Thatcher before the Orange marching season gets into full swing in mid-July. The obvious place for such a statement of the government's intentions is next Monday's debate. □

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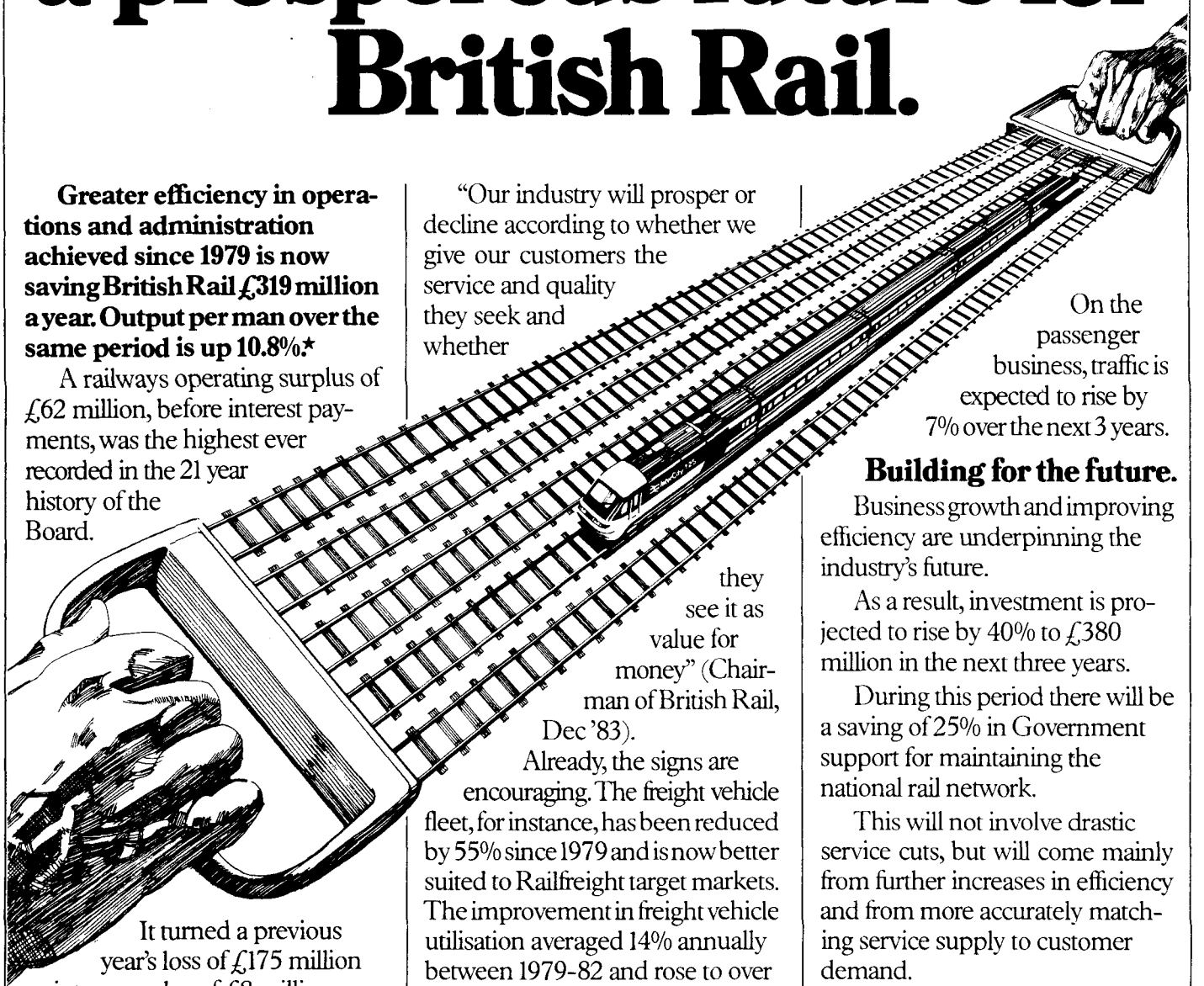

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RACE RELATIONS

Divided Britons

David Cohen and Brian Gosschalk analyse a new poll

BRITISH PEOPLE hold deeply ambivalent attitudes to race relations, according to a recent poll. Nearly half the population favours tougher action against racial discrimination — but the other half wants race relations legislation abolished. And while one in five supports positive discrimination in favour of immigrants, a third thinks immigrants should be encouraged to 'return home'.

The poll, commissioned from MORI for TVS/Channel 4's *Passage to Britain*, gives some evidence for guarded optimism. But it still shows that there is a very long way to go to overcome racism in Britain.

And the poll follows another, published recently in the *Sunday Times* and conducted a year ago by Social and Community Planning Research, which found that nine out of 10 people think Britain is racially prejudiced and one third admit to being prejudiced themselves.

Asked if they wanted black and white people to be treated equally, most respondents said 'yes'. The overwhelming majority thought there should be equal treatment for immigrants and 13 per cent that there should not — a bedrock of conscious fascism. This contrasts, though, with a National Opinion Poll survey in 1967 which asked if 'coloured immigrants' ought to be allowed to compete for jobs on equal terms: 47 per cent said they should not.

The MORI/TVS poll found that half the sample (48 per cent) wanted tougher penalties introduced against racial discrimination — yet about the same number (47 per cent) wanted race relations legislation abolished. One in five (19 per cent) wanted positive discrimination in favour of immigrants applying for jobs (see Table I). Black people were not more eager for positive discrimination than were white people and the unemployed were not more hostile to the idea.

One positive outcome was that the majority of people think that immigrants have improved the quality of British life in some way. In the GLC area, as many as one in two agreed with this.

You would also need to be an addict of boiled beef and carrots not to appreciate the immigrant contribution to food, which has turned the British diet into a multi-cultural feast of curry, chop suey and chips. But the numbers who thought that immigrants had improved the National Health Service, local services and music were also large. One in six of the sample named three or more areas where immigrants had helped. Only 5 per cent said things had got worse, though a quarter could name no area in which there had been a valuable contribution.

While there are grounds for optimism about how Britons feel immigrants should be treated, there is continuing support for tough immigration policies. Thirty-two per cent thought immigrants should be encouraged — though not forced — to return to their original homes; 29 per cent wanted to stop all New Commonwealth (i.e. black) immigration and 24 per cent wanted to limit entry to wives and dependants. Only 6 per cent were willing to see no controls, although 23 per cent did accept the government should encourage immigrants with specific skills to come. Labour voters were no more liberal than either Tories or Alliance ones.

Since the 1960s, questions that have asked about the future of race relations in this country have received a steady stream of 40 per cent to 45 per cent of respondents who thought they would get worse. Despite current unemployment levels, the MORI/TVS survey found no increase in fears of racial conflict. Asked how they saw race relations developing over the next ten years, 44 per cent said they would get worse; 27 per cent that they would stay the same and 17 per cent that they would improve.

In an open-ended follow-up question, we tried to elicit why people held these views. The most coherent pattern emerged from those who say things are getting better. They tended to highlight the fact that with time, there would be integration — especially among the young. Among the quarter who thought that things would stay the same, some identified a lack of government action and quite a few, seizing on the ten-year period in the question, said that a decade was just not enough to change deep-seated attitudes.

A far greater scatter of reasons appeared from those who thought that things would get worse. Reasons quoted included unemployment (cited by 27 per cent of those who thought things would get worse), riots (7 per cent), immigrants living in large families (12 per cent), discrimination against while people (6 per cent), 'too many coming in' (19 per cent) and 'different ways of life' (9 per cent). The reasons given in the follow-up question often blamed unemployment without blaming immigrants.

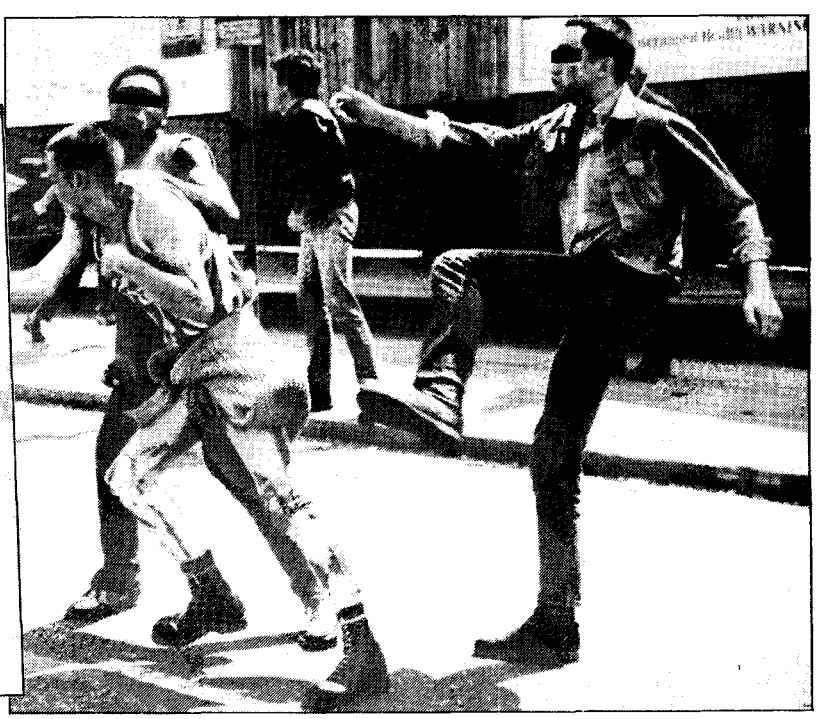
The younger age group (15-34) tended to be more positive than their elders in their attitudes towards discrimination law and in recognising the contribution immigrants had made to life in Britain. Middle-class respondents, with lives more separate from the black communities, also tended to be more liberal. Interestingly, West Indian, African and Asian people replied pretty much as the rest of the population did, although they were only 3 per cent of the sample of 982 respondents questioned in May.

The survey asked white people if they had an African or Asian relative, partner, close friend or other friend. One in five (20 per cent) said they had a friend and a further 7 per cent had a partner or close friend. Among the young that total of 27 per cent rose to 37 per cent — a sign that integration is taking place. □

David Cohen works for TVS and Brian Gosschalk for MORI.

Two faces of race relations in Britain: the young make friends; the NF pick fights

Sally & Richard Greenhill



Andrew Ward/Report

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MINERS' STRIKE

Alliance on the line

For the first time since the 16-week coal strike began, the Triple Alliance has been publicly invoked as part of a new assault against employers and government. But has too much common ground been lost for it to be effective?

'THE TRIPLE Alliance was not set up for one of its three legs to kill off another of the legs'. Thus Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, issued his rallying cry to his union's annual conference last week in Scarborough.

If Sirs is the weak link in what is now the seven union Triple Alliance, he is also the uneasy link-man between the old Alliance set up in January 1981 and the new. Then, with the equally 'moderate' Sid Weighell of the National Union of Railwaymen and Joe Gormley of the NUM, the alliance was formed to campaign for investment in the heavily inter-dependent industries of steel, rail and coal.

But Sirs is now part of the new sharper alliance with the, for him, less congenial new leaders, Arthur Scargill and, from the NUR, Jimmy Knapp.

Although Scargill had tried to revive the Alliance in May 1982, proposing to Weighell that the small rail and mining unions be involved, nothing more happened until Knapp was elected as Weighell's successor in 1983. At the Labour Party conference of September 1983 Knapp, Sirs and Scargill met and decided to hold rallies round the country in mining and steel centres in an attempt to give the Triple Alliance life at local level.

But this was not to Sirs' liking. Happy to present corporate plans to Ministers, he was a most reluctant partner in any move to weld together a militant union grouping in the old industries which might prove to be an 'alternative leadership' to the TUC General Council. In opposition to Scargill and Knapp, Sirs voted on the TUC General Council not to support the NGA printers in their dispute last December and was loudly heckled for this lack of militancy at a Sheffield Triple Alliance rally shortly after.

The alliance then again disappeared from effective national life until it was invoked by Scargill during this coal strike. Now including the TSSA (white-collar rail workers), ASLEF, blastfurnace men and NACODS, mining technical staff, it is wholly dominated by the NUM, and the powerful personalities of Scargill and, in Scotland, Mick McGahey.

Of course, Sirs himself could have called it into being when Ian McGregor began the programme of steel plant closures. Desultory moves were made after the BSC announced it would close Scunthorpe's Normanby Park Works to do this. But Arthur Scargill, then the Yorkshire Area President of the NUM, bluntly told the steel union that, unless it was willing to fight the closure itself, they could expect no help from the NUM. The miners may have refused to handle any new steel in their pits during the 1980 steel strike, but coking coal pits like Polkemmet in West Lothian which have only BSC as customers went on producing and stockpiling coal throughout that stoppage.

Steelworkers' lack of resistance to the loss of their own jobs stems largely from this strike — the lessons of which Scargill, for one, absorbed when devising his own strategy. In 1980, aware of the threat of steel plant closures, the ISTC entered their 13 week strike over pay alone, spending the last seven weeks of the dispute in a fruitless argument over another 0.5 per cent on BSC's pay offer. They emerged demoralised, having done nothing to set up a campaign to protect their jobs, with Sirs and his touching faith in the efficacy of man-to-man talks with government still firmly in control.

Steel remains the weak link because, following EEC pressure on Britain to reduce its steel-making capacity still fruther, one more of

Reports by John Hatton, Alf Young, Mick Hamer and Jonathan Winterton

Britain's remaining five steel plants is due for closure. No one in the steel union know which one, though Llanwern and Ravenscraig are most vulnerable. The workers at each plant, fearful it will be theirs, are determined not to jeopardise it by disrupting production.

AS WELL as this lack of common ground between members, the structural dependence of the three industries is declining. Although coal and steel still make up half of rail's freight, a third of coal now goes by road and only a quarter of steel is transported by rail. Unable to enforce support at national level, the NUM at first left it to each area to make the Triple Alliance work. But while support from railway workers in those areas where the miners themselves were well organised was generally strong, it was clear that steel workers were neither going to support the strike spontaneously, nor respond well to local pressure. Attempts to enforce support at Ravenscraig (see *NS* 25 May) ended in public debacle, and the conflict at the Orgreave coking plant, which flared into mass violence two weeks ago, was already tense.

Yet, if the NUM was to win, following Scargill's strategy of a war to the end, more troops had to be flung into the battle. Electricity production can be cut — and the CEGB is having a harder time than it will admit in stretching its computer programming capacity to feed what electricity is being produced round the national grid; but the virtual cessation of steel production would be a more manageable option.

On 7 June, the day of the miners' mass lobby of Parliament, Scargill was able to announce that the rail and transport unions had agreed to block the movement of oil and other fuels into power stations and halt coal movements into BSC's major integrated plants. On 14 June this strategy was stepped up when the NUM executive met and decided to shift the control of action against steel plants away from the local areas to Sheffield. The change was intended to alleviate steel workers' fears in individual plants that they were being singled out.

So far, it has failed to reassure steel workers and hope now of cutting steel production rests with the railway workers. Although many of them are no more anxious for a bitter fight with the government on behalf of the miners, a small number of sympathetic rail drivers and signal operators can cause far more disruption than can sympathetic workers in steel. The rail blockade, however, is working patchily. Last Monday, the first day of the blockade, three of Llanwern steel works' daily five loads went through because there was no effective picket line. Two, however, were stopped on the track and, worried that the line would be blocked by a queue of stranded trains, BR management declared that, if a crew refused to give an undertaking that they would cross picket lines, the train would be cancelled. This has made the blockade effective.

In Scotland, rail workers are not delivering coal, but it is being brought in by lorry drivers. Scunthorpe is receiving an almost full complement of coal and coke through shipments of coal imports via BSC's own wharf at Flixborough and the River Trent. Coal is being blocked on a 100-yard stretch of railway line owned by BR, leading to Scunthorpe's own rail track, by the rail unions. Meanwhile, the 50 dockers at the wharf — all ISTC members — continue to unload coal into a fleet of lorries owned by Consolidated Land Services of Scunthorpe, a firm whose managing director Douglas Holloway was convicted of corruption in obtaining BSC contracts.

Nonetheless, Sirs solemnly told his conference last week that because of the miners' strike the Scunthorpe works was producing only 25 per cent of its normal output and needed to increase this to 50 per cent to prevent damage to the plant. That morning, the *Daily Telegraph* had printed the previous week's output figures for the plant which showed production running at 60 per cent. Overnight Sirs amended his figures to say that to remain at safe working levels Scunthorpe needed to produce at least 80 per cent of normal levels, forgetting that for long periods of the year, when there was no miners' strike but a slump in demand, the works only produced 50 per cent of capacity, with no ill effects to the plant.

ALTHOUGH never a radical union, the ISTC is newly intransigent in its refusal to offer active help to the miners. In 1972 and 1974 they accepted the virtual cessation of steel production. Now one Scunthorpe union official declares of the NUM: 'If they come picketing again to Scunthorpe, we'll fight them on the streets.' It was Ravenscraig steel workers who

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wanted to use the Employment Act against miners' pickets. At the start of April, Clive Lewis, the left-inclined Welsh-born Scottish organiser of the ISTC, was happily shaking hands with miners' leader Mick McGahey and announcing the steelworkers were 'united in a holy alliance supporting the miners fight'. A few weeks later he was privately wondering whether he should attend the next Triple Alliance meeting wearing rags and tolling a leper's bell.

If Sirs and the ISTC provide the obvious weak link in the formal Triple Alliance, the underlying flaw in any any attempt to build an alliance of unions in manufacturing industries is the Transport and General Workers' Union. It is not a member of the Triple Alliance, despite the agreement on 7 June to stop the movement of oil and coal. Unlike the National Union of Seafarers, who are not members either but who have been trying to prevent the import of foreign coal, it has no way of controlling the people who actually drive the lorries — even where they are in the union. As a lot of oil is now 'moved' by pipeline and immune from industrial action, that leaves a sympathetic T&G leadership with the attempt to ban the movement of iron ore.

If they were to succeed — and much depends on the quality and strength of the picketing — it is unlikely that the ISTC would give in gracefully and let the steel works run down to their minimum safe production level. Rather than merely refusing to support the strike, the union might then turn to more active ways to stop it. Before they leap for injunctions, the managements of BR and BSC will hope the steel union itself will break solidarity actions — just as long as the miners themselves, anxious to get the two weeks' holiday pay which is their due, do not drift back to work next week to work the required days before the annual pit close-down starts on 9 July. □

THIS ENGLAND

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□During the multi-national exercise, which will take place in the North Atlantic after preliminaries in the Firth of Forth and the North Sea, the Nato fleet will sink the tug Confiance. — *Glasgow Herald* (Andrew Burke)

□It really says something, does it not, when you can't even rob a Post Office without the risk of a policeman shooting you. — *Daily Mail* (Miss E. Stein)

□The Hampshire village of Bighton (pop 175) is in peril. Although linked to a nuclear attack warning system, the latest minutes of the parish council record, the terminal in the post office has been out of order these past two months. When the equipment is fixed, the minutes go on, 'the procedure on receipt of a warning is for Mr Brown, the postmaster, to stand outside the shop and sound a rattle.' — *The Guardian* (Edna M. Monckton)

□A 73-year-old Worthing woman has solved the problem of not being allowed to keep her two cats in her rented flat. She has bought a £27,500 seaside flat — for them to live in. 'Money is of no importance when you can use it for something you believe in,' she says. — *Roof* (Chris Marlow)

INSURANCE

Lime St blues

Charles Raw reviews the latest account of the scandals at Lloyd's

IN THE LATE 60s I had a curious assignation in Lime Street, home of Lloyd's, the insurance institution. I had an appointment with an American gentleman named Frank Blosser. Blosser was a P. G. Wodehouse character of a con-man who, besides attempting to raise $600 million on behalf of the fictitious United States Steel Corporation of Panama, wished to try to convince me of the honesty of some patently fraudulent insurance company with which he was associated — and for whose activities he later went to prison. We met in Lime Street because, he said, he had business there.

At that time, Lloyd's, although going through a relatively tough patch financially, was still regarded as a highly respectable body. Yet even then it had some rum associations — Blosser and a whole crowd of his fellow con-men among them. So concerned at that time did the Lloyd's authorities become that they despatched a broker, the late John Weller-Poley I believe, to the States to draw up a black list of crooks and crooked companies with whom Lloyd's brokers and underwriters were then told to do no further business.

All the more extraordinary, therefore, that some six years later a Lloyd's syndicate run by Tim Sasse, a friend of Weller-Poley, should have fallen victim to essentially the same gang of American (and British) con-men at the cost, according to Godfrey Hodgson's book on Lloyd's*, of well over £20 million.

The scandals that have shaken Lloyd's since the summer of 1982, which emerged after the American insurance giant Alexander & Alexander had taken over Lloyd's brokers Alexander Howden, have almost led one to forget that Lloyd's has been beset by problems, if not scandals, for well over a decade. Hodgson's book was largely researched and drafted before that fateful summer and autumn of 1982 and he reconstructs some of those earlier affairs in detail: Salem, the tanker that was scuttled after delivering a load of oil to South Africa; Savonita and the case of 301 allegedly badly damaged Fiats; the computer leasing fiasco, when large numbers of American banks and leasing companies inundated Lloyd's with claims after IBM brought out a new, cheaper range of computers; and the Sasse affair, when American insurance swindlers succeeded in passing off a mass of rubbishy business on Lloyd's — causing New York insurance commissioner Al Lewis to comment that Lloyd's was a 'pirate's cove'.

All these affairs threatened Lloyd's future, not so much because they called into question the skill of Lloyd's underwriters and brokers, but because at issue was the question of whether or not the claim should be paid — and Lloyd's world-wide reputation is largely based, as Hodgson points out, on its unrivalled willingness to pay claims. It was these affairs, in particular Sasse, which led Lloyd's to question its structure and organisation. As a lawyer retained by the dissatisfied 'names' — the investors — of the Sasse syndicate said, after he had persuaded Lloyd's itself to meet most of the liabilities: 'The Sasse debacle has finally proved that the modern complexities of Lloyd's operation cannot adequately be controlled by the outdated regulations and controlling mechanicm now in existence. Lloyd's is organised as a club, but operated worldwide in a complex industry'.

But if the earlier affairs were serious enough, the scandals that came to light after the summer of 1982, which Hodgson was only able to deal with in a final chapter, are of a different order. They have brought into question not just the structure, or competence, of Lloyd's but its fundamental honesty — i.e. not just of one or two small, peripheral brokers or underwriters, but of members of its first eleven.

It is natural for the new brooms at Lloyd's — the new chairman Peter Miller and the new chief executive Ian Davison — to try to belittle the extent of these problems: Miller told Hodgson that he could not believe that 'the shameful behaviour of a very few people is representative'. But the truth is that it was not just a few, and furthermore those that were involved were those who, until their feet of clay were exposed, were among the most revered and respected in the business. Even the former chairman of Lloyd's was implicated.

Will Lloyd's survive? Hodgson clearly thinks so: 'The ship's fabric has been refitted. The new articles have been drawn up and explained to the crew. She is slipping down the tide again, and it is time for us to wave our handkerchiefs and wonder what the next voyage will bring'. In reality, I suspect the key to survival is not so much in the structure, but in the financial and taxation advantages of Lloyd's, which Hodgson lucidly explains in an early chapter. Essentially they amount to two: first, Lloyd's is the one place where a wealthy individual can make his or her money work twice. ('The great advantage of being a member of Lloyd's is that you can write several times your stake while continuing to earn income on it', a syndicate accountant told Hodgson.) Secondly, losses can be set against tax on investment income, which means effectively that any loss is cut by three quarters (as long, of course, as losses do not exceed investment income), and is met by a cheque from the Inland Revenue.

'Every week there is further evidence that Lloyd's can and will deal with the miscreants', Davison told Hodgson. 'Steps are being taken. We are not sweeping our problems under the carpet.' Well, let us see which miscreants are dealt with; and why not publish Lloyd's own reports into the scandals?

Not to do so looks suspiciously like sweeping under the carpet to me. I had hoped that Lloyd's was a bit more courageous than it was back in the 60s, when it would not even acknowledge authorship of its blacklist in case one of the crooks sued for libel. □

*Lloyd's of London, Allen Lane, £14.95.

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RATES

Fitting the cap

The Rates Act, which gives the government the power to limit the rates of local councils, was passed this week. Labour councillors are agreed that they don't want cuts in jobs and services but they're unsure of how to resist rate capping without running the risk of personal bankruptcy. John Rentoul and Christian Wolmar examine the options

A PERSONAL crisis faces Labour councillors in local authorities on the rate capping hit list: are they prepared to risk losing their homes and possessions in a bid to avoid cuts in council spending?

So far, there has only been ritual intonation of the basic principles on which Labour councils were elected: no cuts in jobs or services. Labour councils generally agree that they should not co-operate in the process of rate capping. But, as we show below, within a few months of following a strategy of 'non-co-operation', councillors will face the issue of making spending cuts or defying the law.

Several strategies have been seized on as 'the solution' — only to fall apart on detailed examination. Mass resignation seemed at first to be the only possible and legitimate response to the restriction of powers imposed by rate capping. All Labour councillors should resign, protesting that they cannot carry out their mandate. But, even if they are re-elected on a popular tide, their Tory opponents would have been able to pass a restrictive budget in the meantime, leaving the newly elected Labour councillors to adminster it. Only Lewisham seems to have seriously debated this option, and has effectively rejected it.

Mass resignation offers at best a postponement of the central question: should the Labour councillors sanction some cuts, either passively or actively — or should they vote to defy the law? Liverpool has dodged the final decision for nearly four months now — providing the political space to mount a campaign in favour of local services and against central government interference. But, ultimately, the choice will have to be faced.

There are two ways of knuckling under. First, openly, as by Bob Lacey, Tory leader of the hung Brent council: 'I want us to avoid being rate capped at all costs and we are looking at making significant savings to achieve this. But, if we fail, I am quite prepared to accept the necessary discipline of rate capping.'

Secondly, more covertly — what's being called 'fudge and nudge' — 'humane' cuts achieved by Labour councillors is the best way to soften the blow. Basildon seems committed to this route and others may follow, depending on how hard they are clobbered by rate capping.

ON 23 MAY leaders of Labour councils met in secret to try to thrash out a common strategy. They failed. On 6 and 7 July representatives of Labour councils and parties, and unions meet in Sheffield to search for an agreed strategy.

Two 'confrontational' caucuses have emerged. Essentially they propose the same strategy, but in different languages. Margaret Hodge of Islington and David Blunkett of Sheffield lead the 'we're reasonable people but . . .' group, while the South London boroughs and the GLC use the language of the barricades.

'It's defiance or compliance,' says Hodge, leader of Britain's most media exposed authority. 'There's no middle way. And we've nailed our colours to the mast of defiance.' Indeed, Islington has little option. By creative accounting and delaying spending, Islington went into this financial year with £16.5m reserves out of a budget of £86m. Since it intends to end the year with no reserves, it will need, according to Hodge, a 20 per cent rate rise just to maintain spending and therefore the effect of rate capping is likely to be devastating. However, other councils have not committed themselves in that way, allowing them to keep the 'fudge and nudge' option open.

The more combative councils hope to take the initiative by producing their budgets for 1985/86 before the government announces the spending limits it expects councils to follow in mid-July. Islington will be publishing its budget in the next couple of weeks — and then sticking to it.

Once the government has published the spending limits for the rate capped authorities councils have a right to appeal to the government to get their limit raised, a procedure called 'derogation'. But when an authority makes such an appeal, the Act gives the government the right to specify particular cuts it wants made, or even to *reduce* its limit. Graham Bett, Leicester's deputy leader, says: 'Derogation gives the Secretary of State unacceptable powers. Just by recognising the procedure, we would be accepting the whole process of rate capping. That's why Tory Portsmouth has been included in the hit list. They'll apply for derogation, get all their money back, and the Labour councils will be made to look as if they're deliberately cutting their own throats.'

After deciding not to seek derogation, there are two strategies for Labour confrontationists. One is to set the maximum rate permitted, but to continue spending according to the council's budget. This would postpone a crunch until the winter of 1985 when such authorities would start to run out of money. The catch, though, is that they won't do so at the same time: one will be in the firing line first.

The other strategy is to refuse to set a rate. It was outlined in last week's *Labour Herald*, in an article signed by Ted Knight, the leader of Lambeth, the leaders of Lewisham, Southwark and Greenwich, and John McDonnell, the GLC deputy leader. They argued that this would unite councils in a simultaneous act of defiance.

Unfortunately, this is not true. Because of the differences between upper and lower tier councils, this strategy won't guarantee that all the authorities come into the firing line at once, either. The GLC, the Inner London Education authority and the metropolitan county councils, including hit-listed South Yorkshire and Merseyside, are all 'precepting' authorities. That means they are legally bound to set a rate (that is, to issue a 'precept' for their share of the rates collected by the boroughs) by 10 March 1985, whereas there is nothing in law which specifies when district or borough councils have to set *their* rates, as Liverpool found.

Nevertheless, the need for unity is another thing the Labour Party and the trade unions are agreed on. The strategy of defiance is only viable if several councils pursue it together. They are aware that there is no point in 'confrontation for the sake of it'. Councils must have, first, popular support and, second, the ability to cause the government so much trouble as to force it to make concessions.

But as well as unity between authorities, defiance depends on unity within each council. In Lambeth, with a Labour majority of just three, this is especially so. In Liverpool, a process of 'weeding out' councillors not prepared to defy the law has been going on for some time. In an effort to firm the resolution of its councillors, Greenwich is considering a 'loyalty pledge', committing them to majority decisions come what may. Those that don't sign will be asked to resign now rather than wait until the going gets too hot.

It is already too late for next year's 'hit list' councillors to transfer their houses or other property to their spouse's name. Section 42 of the Bankruptcy Act 1914 states that any settlement or transfer 'other than one made in consideration of marriage or to a purchaser for value' made within two years of the bankruptcy shall be 'null and void'. □

The 'Hit List'

Basildon, Essex
Camden, North London
Greater London Council
Greenwich, South London
Hackney, North London
Haringey, North London
Inner London Education Authority
Islington, North London
Lambeth, South London
Leicester
Lewisham, South London
Portsmouth, Hampshire
South Yorkshire (includes Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham)
Southwark, South London
Thamesdown, Swindon, Wiltshire

Yet to be decided
Brent, North London
Merseyside (includes Liverpool)
Sheffield

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DIARY

Michael Leapman

Chicago

Switching on breakfast TV in my Chicago motel room, I was whisked back to the 70s. There was the wholesome Jimmy Carter, beaming at the cameras, the pert Rosalynn alongside him, both offering banal reflections on the Democratic presidential campaign. Asked why he thought he had failed to be re-elected four years ago, he blamed the press, though he was philosophical about it. He admitted that his success in 1976 had been helped by the popular portrayal of his opponent, Gerald Ford, as a man who couldn't climb from a helicopter without bumping his head. Four years later the wheel turned and it was Carter who was cast as the bumbling half-wit. Like it or not, he seems sure to be an issue again this year. Reagan's strategy against Mondale will be to identify him with the Carter White House in which he was Vice-President. Mondale's people would be happier if Carter would stay away from next month's convention. Americans are unsure whether the long primary fight against Gary Hart will prove a help or a hindrance to Mondale come November. Though it has exposed divisions in the party, the plus is that the candidate has survived his ordeal of fire. It seems to me that the primaries prove nothing except which candidate's staff is better able to keep him from committing damaging blunders. Hart lost the important New Jersey primary chiefly because of an incautious remark comparing the state unfavourably with California. Thus are elections won and lost in America, but how does it demonstrate his suitability or otherwise for the Presidency? I fear that Mondale has all the attributes of Adlai Stevenson—a decent, honourable loser. That means the re-election of Reagan; and any system which allows that is surely flawed.

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Like most journalists I prefer to deal in certainties. Academics, by contrast, thrive on ambiguity. Thus I had hoped to find Chicago, America's most beautiful city, in full celebration of the centenary of an invention that literally shaped the 20th century — the skyscraper. Instead I found it racked with doubt. Until a few years ago it was widely accepted that the first true skyscraper was William le Baron Jenney's Home Insurance Building, erected in Chicago in 1884 and pulled down less than 50 years later. Although only nine stories high, it was the first building to be constructed largely on an iron frame, an innovation that allowed structures of theoretically unlimited height. Yet now architectural historians are divided about its significance. The Art Institute of Chicago has mounted an exhibition of Chicago and New York architecture. In the catalogue Carl Condit, who 20 years ago was unequivocal in support of the Home Insurance Building's credentials, now states with equal certainty that the first skyscraper was the original Equitable Life Assurance headquarters in New York, started in 1868 and also long since demolished. That was only six stories high. Its claim is based mainly on its being the first building where the landlord was canny enough to charge premium rents for the higher floors. Since architecture and economics are interdependent I dare say Condit has a point, though I find it depressing that the skills of the engineer should now be thought to rank lower than those of the estate agent.

○

Writing on this page from Cyprus in April, I reported the bid by Barbara, wife of the socialist politician Vasos Lyssarides, to have a large hoard of Cypriot antiquities returned to the island from the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In New York I raised the question with Dietrich von Bothmer, curator of Greek and Roman antiquities at the Metropolitan, who did not hold out much hope for the success of this Elgin Marbles campaign writ small. 'She has been on the phone to me constantly,' he complained, before launching into the standard response of museum authorities to such demands—that if you return one such treasure, where will it all end? Would Cleopatra's various Needles, for instance, all have to be uprooted and sent back to Egypt? In my April note I suggested, half in jest, that once the Turks got wind of the claim they would put in a counter bid. It is unsafe to joke about such matters. Dr von Bothmer has already had calls from Turkish journalists, although I should have thought it inappropriate for questions of rightful ownership to be raised by a nation that is in illegal occupation of nearly half an island.

○

ROGER WODDIS

Dial M for Mania

'If the world doesn't end, we would like people to pay their phone bills within a reasonable period of time.' — Bruce Carswell, vice-president of the American General Telephone and Electronic Corporation, on the aftermath of World War III.

After the fall and the death of cities,
After the dark that succeeds the crime,
See how the starred and striped survivors
Hurry to pay their bills on time.

When you crawl out from under the rubble,
Your children charred, having lost your wife,
Remember your debt to the Corporation,
Whose love of the buck is a way of life.

The calming voice of the military chaplain
Will comfort you when you're feeling odd.
It comes to you as from a long distance:
'Nuclear science is a gift from God.'

Here's your account: pay now, die later.
Better to settle and pay it all
Than be cut off by the operator
When you are making your final call.

'As long as America minds its business,
We'll survive,' the vice-president said.
'If this wonderful world should end tomorrow,
Have a nice day when the line goes dead.'

The American media continue their discovery of Rupert Murdoch, which began last winter when he bought the *Chicago Sun-Times* and made a power play for Warner Communications. The ABC television network is this week running a profile of him including an interview by the formidable Barbara Walters, than which there is no greater accolade. Recognising that, Murdock cooperated by letting himself be filmed frolicking in Central Park with his family and even jogging. Last month the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) transmitted a two part series on him in which they interviewed readers of his *New York Post*. 'I've heard it was sensational,' said one, 'a little bit too sensational. In other words, they lie a little.' 'Do you mind that?' the interviewer asked. 'No,' the man replied. 'It makes it interesting.' Murdoch clearly knows his market.

○

Since the airlines in America were deregulated a few years ago, lively competition has led to a new phenomenon on the busiest routes. Overbooking is common, so before takeoff the staff in the departure lounge often ask for volunteers to be bumped from a flight should the need arise. The inducement is guaranteed passage on the next plane plus a free return ticket to anywhere the airline services. Flying from Washington to New York I sat next to a government social worker who bemoaned that, although she had been the first to volunteer, it had not been necessary to bump her from our plane. She had already been planning in her mind how she would use her free ticket to Florida. She told me that students make a lucrative sideline of buying tickets for likely-looking flights in the hope of being asked to stand down and of claiming their free trips. If the ruse fails they lose nothing: they simply cash in their tickets and try again later. She added that her flight out to Washington early the previous morning had been an hour late so everyone had been offered complimentary drinks. She had plumped for a glass of beer. 'Beer for breakfast?' I queried. 'If it's free you take it,' she explained. 'It's the American way.'

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Doing the dirty on the allies

Claudia Wright on how the Western states look the other way while America prepares to stab them in the back in an oil crisis

Washington

THE PROSPECT of an international oil shortage caused by the war in the Gulf ought to concentrate the best minds of the Western Alliance. After the charade of the London summit, it would be useful to know just how united the Alliance would be in adversity. However, if the Reagan Administration has its way, there is likely to be no co-ordination or sharing of oil; individual states would be obliged to depend on themselves; and the Reagan Administration would license an oil-buying spree that would drive prices to astronomical heights, draw the world's supplies into US tanks, and resell them at enormous profits for US suppliers.

On 11 July, the 21 member states of the International Energy Agency (IEA) will meet in Paris, and for public reassurance pretend that this grim scenario is impossible. Not a word of open criticism will be made of US policy in an oil emergency. The US delegates will go home and assure the Republican Party constituencies on which Mr Reagan's re-election depends — the oil-producing states which stand to gain the most, and the farm states which would be the hardest hit — that there is nothing to worry about. The Thatcher government, which is likely to enjoy a sizeable windfall of its own in an oil crisis, will support the Americans; the Europeans and Japanese will politely bite their tongues.

The imperturbability of the oil markets to the kind of anti-shipping warfare that occurred last month in the Gulf may have lulled many people into supposing the prospect of a crisis is too remote to cause concern. There is, according to IEA estimates of current oil production and consumption, a surplus of world supply over demand of about 1 million barrels a day (bd). However, quick arithmetic will demonstrate that if the supply of Gulf oil (about 7.7 million bd) were halted, there would not be enough surplus oil capacity in the rest of the world (about 4.6 million bd) to make up the loss. Result — a deficit (about 3.1 million bd) that would have to be drawn out of current strategic reserves and stocks.

The major industrial countries have ample oil in storage to make up this deficit for a comfortable period (see table above).

These calculations ignore several important factors. They don't show the impact of the likely surge in oil demand at the onset of a crisis, when countries, companies and individuals start hoarding in case reserves fail to last. Also omitted from the calculations is the oil demand from the majority of countries — oil-short, already in debt, unable to afford sizable reserves — who are not members of the IEA. Thus, the figures should not be interpreted to mean that just because reserves are large, they will be effective in preventing the price of oil from rocketing.

Country	Daily Gulf oil imports *(barrels)*	Strategic oil reserves *(in million barrels)*	Duration of stocks at current demand *(Days)*
USA	473,000	400	915
Britain	176,000	121	688
Canada	52,000	114	2,192
France	590,000	163	276
Germany	290,000	263	907
Italy	754,000	146	194
Japan	2,400,000	441	169

The basic problem which IEA has wrestled with for a decade is how to control oil demand in a crisis and manage oil stocks to hold prices stable, prevent spot shortages, and avoid large-scale economic disruption. Until the Reagan Administration arrived in Washingtron, there was a rough consensus on oil policy between the Americans, the Europeans and the Japanese. This aimed to cope with a crisis by a combination of restraining demand domestically and assuring a fair share of oil reserves internationally, if individual IEA member states were harder hit than others. The US committed itself to filling a Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), and implementing domestic and international plans to draw down and distribute this oil in the event of a major shortage. According to the IEA definition, this would be a drop of 7 per cent in the oil supplies of one or all of the IEA members.

The new Reagan team rejected virtually all that their predecessors had done. Before the Reagan Administration arrived, the US Secretary of Energy, Donald Hodel, said: 'Increasing government control was the name of the game in the energy market. But that strategy did not work. Price and allocation controls were counterproductive. They caused reduced production plus shortages. Our first strategy is to minimize federal intervention . . . '. Lack of evidence to substantiate these claims hasn't inhibited Hodel and his deputies from dismantling as much of the US crisis management system as they could.

Camera Press

Reagan's re-election depends on Texan oil support, not IEA allies

Helmut Merklein, a Texas academic and consultant before he became an Assistant Secretary of Energy, has publicly urged the statutory prohibition of government price controls, the liquidation of domestic oil allocation plans, and the scrapping of agreements with the IEA for sharing oil in a crisis. The Administration has refused to spend $800 million appropriated by Congress to fill the strategic reserve. It has also forced the daily 'fill rate' to drop from the originally planned target of 300,000 bd to 178,000 bd in the first half of this year.

'Never ask a free market man what will really happen in the case of a crisis', Merklein told a congressional hearing in 1981, because he doesn't need to know. Citing West Germany as the model which the Administration aims to emulate, Merklein and Hodel have argued that in a crisis the market should be allowed to limit demand and allocate supply at whatever price it sets. The evidence that German policy actually relies on strict government-regulated rationing to restrain demand, if prices were to rise steeply or domestic shortages appear, has not deterred the US officials from repeating their claims.

UNTIL RECENTLY, in the absence of public concern about an oil crisis, only a handful of oil trade journalists and Democrats in Congress knew or cared enough to be concerned about the implications of the Administration's policy. An IEA test of the effects of an oil shortage, undertaken a year ago, showed that the Reagan Administration would not intervene to prevent

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the price of oil rising to $98 a barrel — more than three times the current price — and would not distribute SPR oil to relieve specific domestic or international shortages, or alleviate the special needs of the American poor. State Department officials who had negotiated earlier allocation arrangements with the IEA, warned the Congress that, if implemented in a genuine crisis, the Administration's policy raised the possibility 'of drawing substantial oil through the price effects toward the US at the same time the IEA system was trying to move that oil away from the US . . . it is fair to say that many of our (IEA) partners felt as though this could jeopardize the system.'

Last month, to pacify the IEA and prevent IEA criticism from agitating American public opinion, Administration officials offered the appearance of a new plan. This was hastily leaked to the press as Mr Reagan arrived at the London summit. The plan called for IEA members to increase their reserves, and accept with the US a co-ordinated plan for drawing down stocks early enough in a crisis to dampen market speculation. Taken at face value, the American proposals were uncontroversial. Everyone has agreed on the need for adequate reserve levels and for international co-ordination in releasing them on the market.

The problem is whether the Administration will control demand early enough to prevent the 'drawdown' of stock being gobbled up in a buying panic or speculation by the US oil industry. IEA members want assurances that restraint of oil demand and control of prices in Europe and Japan would not be exploited by the free-for-all profiteering the Reagan Administration calls the 'free market'.

According to US law, the SPR can be drawn down by a maximum of 2.2 million barrels per day, but the Administration has refused to consider any alternative to open auction for allocating this supply, or to say whether it would try to match the shortfall in a crisis. Officials have also hinted they might cut the amount of SPR oil available for sharing with IEA members if domestic demand was strong. Congressmen suspect that US demand would surge, prices would jump, and domestic shortages would quickly develop. The House Committee on Government Operations has therefore asked the Administration to deliver by 17 July 'an analysis of the impact on oil prices of the release of various amount of SPR oil . . . under at least three disruption scenarios representative of the range of likely possibilities.'

Oil industry experts in the US call Hodel, Merklein and Donald Pearlman (Hodel's chief adviser and representative to the IEA) 'amateurs who don't understand the behaviour of the oil industry in a crisis'. Middle-level officials who have been anxious to negotiate an oil emergency plan that would satisfy Congress and the IEA have been muzzled. In response to questions from *NS*, the State Department issued a statement last week claiming that US policy will 'rely on the market to the maximum extent possible to handle the effects of a disruption . . . (will) utilize the substantial volumes stored in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve early in a major disruption . . . (and will) supply fully the IEA and its emergency sharing system.'

These intentions are belied by actions the Energy Department has taken. Officials refuse to accept Congressional proposals to facilitate oil sharing with the IEA. Asked on 14 June to explain why the other IEA members should give the US a 'free ride', agreeing to draw down their reserves as the US proposes, while the US refuses to accept their proposal for demand restraints, Secretary Hodel replied: 'We are not going to co-operate on demand restraint so the Europeans will have to go along with the US stock draw down'. He implied that IEA members have no choice but to build up their stocks for this eventuality and claimed that US policy is the same as Germany's. German officials deny this. They and the French are reluctant to criticize the Administration publicly, saying only that 'additional consultations' are necessary to 'clarify' what the US is proposing and what the IEA will agree to.

So concerned is the US military establishment at the likelihood of chaos in an oil crisis that the Pentagon has asked Congress for statutory powers to declare an emergency before the Energy Department agrees, and to intervene in the market to obtain the oil it wants. In short, not even the Defense Department thinks the Administration's policy will work. If the Pentagon says it can't trust Reagan's free market, what must Western European leaders be thinking? □

WEST GERMANY

Strasbourg sanctuary

Martin Griffin on journalists trapped by a terrorist law

WHEN THE members of the new European Parliament take their seats in Strasbourg there will be at least two who are facing something worse than four years of boredom and political shadowboxing.

They are the West German Green MEPs Benny Härlin and Michael Klöckner, both of whom were sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment by a West Berlin court for their involvement with the militant-anarchist magazine *Radikal*. Immediately after the sentence was delivered last March, the Greens voted the two journalists into the third and sixth place on their list of candidates for the European elections; the party won an unexpected seven seats, putting Härlin and Klöckner safely — for the time being — under the protection of parliamentary immunity.

The *Radikal* case became somewhat of a *cause célèbre* in West Germany and caused considerable disquiet not only on the Left, but also among people who had no liking for the magazine's politics. *Radikal* changed in the late 70s from a 1968 socialist paper into a flagship of the militant 'autonomist' groupings who saw no possibility of compromise with the State. Although they gave space to a wide spectrum of Left opinion, the magazine concentrated on supporting squatting struggles, the battles over the new runway at Frankfurt airport and in particular the anti-imperialist groups, who regard the Federal Republic as nothing but a prosperous colony of the US and the puppet of US militarism in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

What provoked the authorities in particular was the habit of printing statements from so-called 'Revolutionary Cells'. These were normally admissions of responsibility for small-scale 'urban terrorist' action like fire-bomb attacks against the offices of multinational companies — something that happens surprisingly often in West Germany. The 'Revolutionary Cells' do not exist as organisations, but rather as a general name for groups who occasionally make (largely symbolic) gestures against the 'Orwell State' which is what many see West Germany becoming.

Although the effect of such actions appears lightweight in comparison to the urban guerilla groups of the 1970s, the Berlin Public Prosecutor went after *Radikal* with the full array of anti-terrorist legislation which had been brought in during the period of the Schleyer and Ponto killings and the Mogadishu hijacking. Section 129a of the Criminal Law ('publicising or supporting a criminal or terroristic association') — now regarded as an unfortunate paragraph even by the SPD, who helped to introduce it — was the basis for the charges against Härlin and Klöckner, who were the only people connected with the magazine that the authorities could find. They were arrested in June 1983 and kept in custody for two months.

QUITE APART from the Public Prosecutor's obvious personal feud against the magazine and the fact that this particular court had been suffering from a shortage of juicy 'terrorist' cases to occupy it, the exaggerated style of the proceedings disturbed many people: the provisions of Section 129a, for example, were used to replace the lawyers chosen by the defendants with state-appointed lawyers who could be relied upon to behave themselves. When the judgment was delivered, it was accompanied by an attack on the press in general which caused most of the reporters present to leave the courtroom in protest. Even conservative newspapers expressed their opposition to the direction of the case and the severity of the sentences.

The legal position does not provide much ground for optimism. Härlin and Klöckner are seeking a judgment from the West German High Court that the law has been misapplied. Ninety per cent of such appeals are rejected. If the sentences are upheld, the West German Foreign Office must apply to the European Parliament for a suspension of parliamentary immunity so that the two MEPs can be brought back to Berlin to serve their sentences. This could create difficulties for the government, as some MEPs may criticise the implications of a law which allows people not suspected of involvement in violent activity to be tried under sections rooted in the Baader-Meinhof period of the 1970s. But given the lack of support from other parliamentarians for Bobby Sands and Toni Negri (elected in the last Italian general election but deprived of parliamentary immunity), this may be over-optimistic. □

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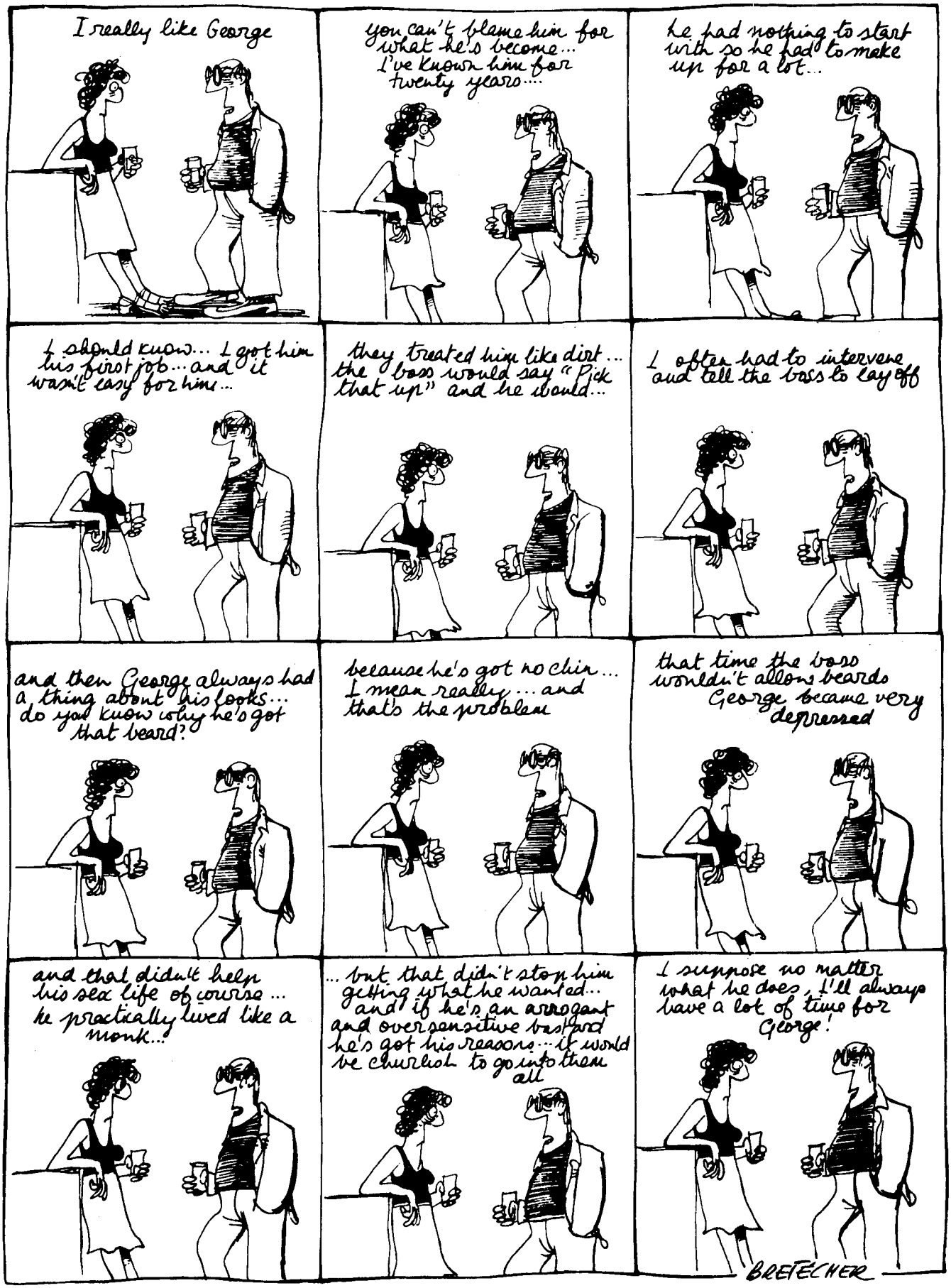
BRETECHER

A FRIEND IN NEED


I really like George
you can't blame him for what he's become... I've known him for twenty years....
he had nothing to start with so he had to make up for a lot...
I should know... I got him his first job... and it wasn't easy for him...
they treated him like dirt... the boss would say "Pick that up" and he would...
I often had to intervene and tell the boss to lay off
and then George always had a thing about his looks... do you know why he's got that beard?
because he's got no chin... I mean really... and that's the problem
that time the boss wouldn't allow beards George became very depressed
and that didn't help his sex life of course... he practically lived like a monk...
... but that didn't stop him getting what he wanted... and if he's an arrogant and oversensitive bastard he's got his reasons... it would be churlish to go into them all
I suppose no matter what he does, I'll always have a lot of time for George!
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

No easy images

Ken Edwards, Information Worker, South East London Consortium, London SE5

Neil McIntosh's reply (Letters 15 June) to Christian Wolmar's perceptive review of *Down and Out: Orwell's Paris and London Revisited* is disingenuous. As its Director, he knows very well what the point was of criticism of Shelter's poster campaign. The poster showed a 'normal' family alongside the slogan 'You don't have to be a down and out to be out and down'. The implication was that these nice people deserved help precisely because they were not 'down and outs', 'vagrants', 'dossers', alcoholics or drug addicts.

Apart from being one of the shoddier pieces of Orwell exploitation seen this year, the Shelter/Penguin book is right in line with this analysis, which distinguishes between the deserving and undeserving homeless. Here we have those people the poster didn't show: the familiar freaks' gallery of sleepers in cardboard boxes, addicts shooting up, drunks, punks, etc. So, they exist. But where are Orwell's (or Jack London's) politics?

There are many of us working in voluntary organisations, housing associations, local authorities and campaigning bodies to end the scandal of single homelessness, and to ensure that one day the right to housing becomes a basic right for every individual in our society. Some of those working to this end are people who have become politicised by their own homelessness. None of us needs this coffee-table book. So who does?

Profiteering in oil

David Pelly, CAITS, Polytechnic of North London

In an otherwise excellent article on the oil companies' run down of the refining industry Peter Odell (*NS* 15 June) omits to pinpoint one of the major reasons why these companies are not putting North Sea crude through refineries in the UK. This is the reduced tax liability that the oil companies face if they sell the crude to a third party abroad as opposed to processing it in their own refineries.

The lion's share of the oil companies' income is derived from the production and sale of crude rather than from the refining and processing of crude and its products — known as 'downstream' activities. The introduction of Petroleum Revenue Tax (PRT) at an effective rate of 90 per cent was (until recent budgetary changes) directed at the enormous profits accruing to the oil companies.

When companies like Shell or BP process crude in their refineries they really 'sell' crude to their downstream operations. The government assesses their revenue from petroleum sales on the basis of the official North Sea price of $30 per barrel. This yielded a high income from the production side of their activities but one which was subject to the relatively high tax of PRT.

In exporting crude the oil companies will sell, usually to a third party, on the free market where the 'spot price' has tended to be lower, at $28-29 per barrel, than the official price. This meant a lower income from petroleum sales but a higher income from downstream activities which benefitted from the lower feedstock prices. The consequence of this policy of exporting crude was effectively to transfer the oil companies' profits from petroleum sales where it was taxed at 90 per cent to manufacturing where it was taxed at 52 per cent. To the workforce in the refining industry the consequences were closure and redundancy.

Recent changes in the fiscal regime do not look likely to alter this situation, though a rise in 'spot' oil prices would put paid to this particularly blatant piece of profiteering.

Sound on home ownership

Dr Oonagh McDonald MP, Terry Davis MP, Jeff Rooker MP, Opposition Treasury Team, House of Commons

We have always relied on the *New Statesman* as the one political weekly with its heart in the right place. But in the recent Miscellany piece on the Finance Bill (*NS* 8 June), your diarist entirely missed the point of our amendment on mortgage interest tax relief.

Our amendment had three objectives. First, it gave us the opportunity to set out Labour's record in helping young couples to buy their own homes compared with the Tory record of cynical pre-election manipulation. Second, it enabled us to draw attention to the fact that the average price of a semi-detached (pre-1919) house is £37,000 in the South East and £44,000 in the GLC area — compared with a limit of £30,000 for mortgage interest tax relief. Third, it created an opening to argue Labour's policy that this tax relief should be limited to the standard rate income tax instead of giving more to the rich than the rest.

Of course, the amendment did not encompass the whole of Labour's housing policy, but it did provide an opportunity to put Labour's attitude towards home ownership on the record.

Low Pay Unit replies

Chris Pond, Director, Low Pay Unit

Amrit Wilson's allegations that the Low Pay Unit is unwilling to work with trade unions, and that it has sacked a worker who wished to do so (*NS* 22 June) will appear incredible to those in the trade unions with whom we have worked closely over the years. So they should: the allegations are mischievous and untrue.

Raghib Ahsan was not dismissed 'for working too closely with trade unions'. The article seeks to mislead by quoting selectively from a letter, running to three pages, in which I describe the work which the Unit is undertaking with unions. The letter begins with the statement (not quoted in the article) that 'the Unit believes that in the long run the most likely means for achieving improvements in the position of the low paid is through trade union action'. Deft splicing of sentences is used by Amrit Wilson to suggest quite the opposite. The letter is no way suggests that the West Midlands Low Pay Unit should be a replica of the London Unit, as the article alleges: it contains no reference at all to this issue. However, at a meeting before the dispute arose it was agreed that WMLPU should concentrate on an intensive regional campaign, working closely with local trade unions, local authorities and community organisations. There is no disagreement on this within the Unit.

Elsewhere Amrit Wilson would have readers believe that Ahsan was dismissed for taking 'active moves towards changing the position of low paid workers' — something which the Low Pay Unit apparently opposes! She cites as an example the much acclaimed campaign on clothing sweatshops. Yet this is a campaign to which the Unit as a whole is fully committed. Ahsan did *not* write the pamphlet *Below the Minimum* on clothing sweatshops, nor did he organise the successful meeting to launch the report. (He was, after all, out of the country for the month preceding the meeting.) No action committee was ever established 'to recruit clothing workers to unions'. Cynically, Wilson misquotes one of the WMLPU project workers as saying that Ahsan was asked to withdraw from the campaign because 'we cannot work too closely with unions.' This was never said.

Amrit Wilson cannot apparently decide why Ahsan was dismissed, and she helps to convey this confusion to readers by giving at different points in the article three different reasons. Since none of those listed is correct, let me clarify. The dismissal resulted from Ahsan's persistent refusal to abide by decisions collectively agreed within the Unit. As a small organisation, often working under intense pressure, the Unit's work requires mutual trust and cooperation as well as commitment. Ahsan refused to work in this way, seeking to impose decisions on his colleagues without their consent and sometimes without their prior knowledge. Ahsan was well placed, as senior project officer, to use this democratic process of decision making to persuade his colleagues that his approach was correct. He failed to do so, preferring instead to pursue a lone and somewhat disparate campaign, undermining both the work and morale of the rest of the staff. His dismissal is supported unanimously by all other members of the Unit.

In the neck

Alistair Elliot, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

John Lucas's spiteful one-paragraph review of Anthony Thwaite's *Poems 1953-1983* (30 years' work there) concentrated on a single poem, and cruelly misread it. If Lucas doesn't care for 'Mr Cooper' (whose throw-away lines he contrasts falsely with Larkin's 'Mr Bleaney'), may I suggest 'Qasida on the track to Msus' or 'Elsewhere' or 'Waking', all of which come from different books. For the book of poems reviewed (*NS* 22 June) was Thwaite's eighth, though Lucas doesn't tell us so.

By the way, Lucas also makes a false contrast between Louis Simpson (war-poet who fought) and Randall Jarrell (war-poet who didn't). I understand Jarrell was a pilot and navigator in the USAF and fought over Europe and in the Pacific. I leave it to others to correct Lucas about the American consciousness of the First World War, though perhaps he might look at the *Oxford Companion to American Literature* on the subject.

Stop Pit Closures

The New Statesman NUJ and SOGAT 82 chapels support the miners and their wives in their struggle against pit closures.

27 June 1984
Day of Solidarity

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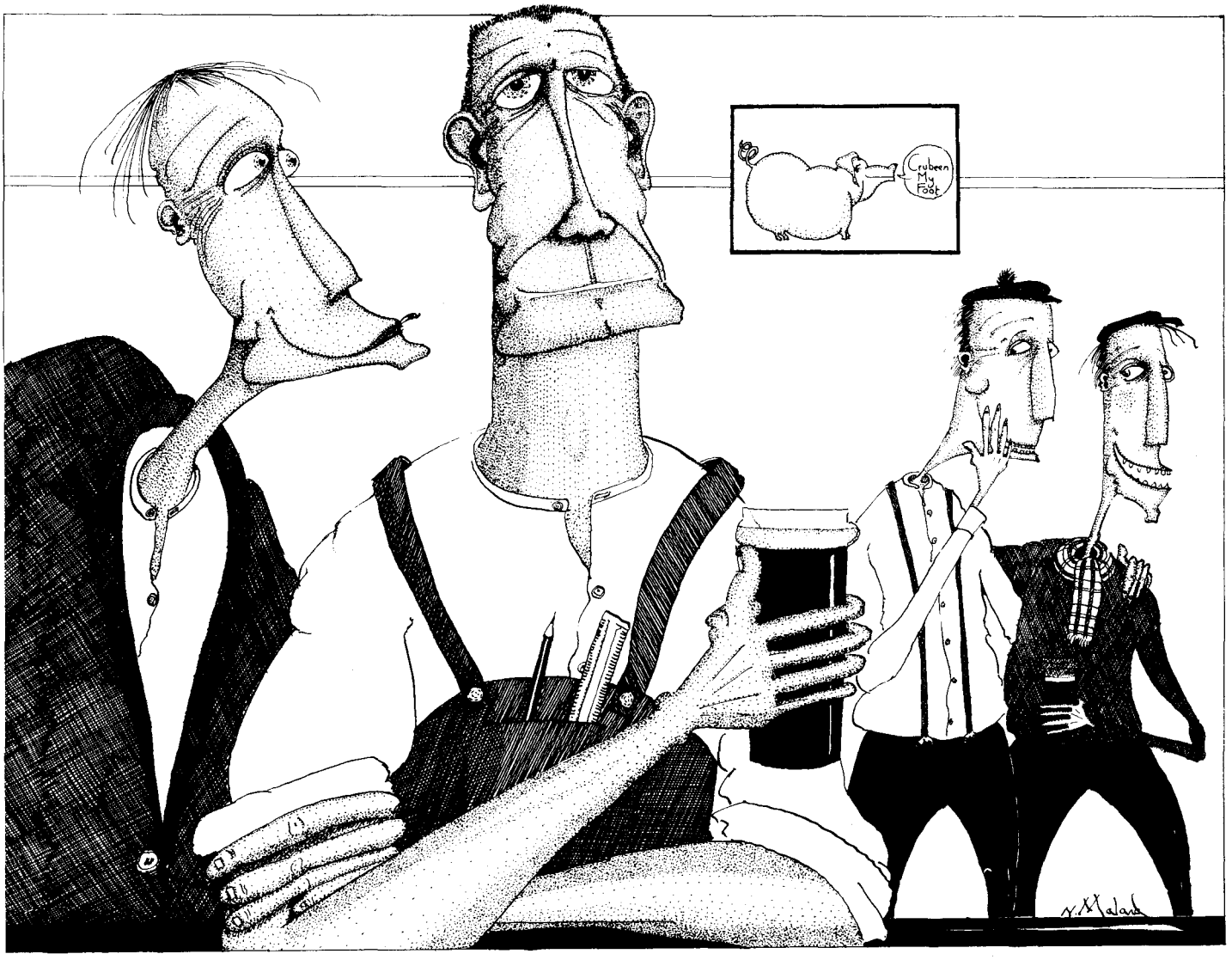

Nick Maland

Almost graceful like a dancer

by
Robert Sproat

AH, BUT IT WAS a different world then entirely. The times are that changed nowadays; sometimes I feel like I am a native born of those old times but only an immigrant and a stranger in the present day. I'll tell you a thing puts what I mean right in a nutshell.

When first I came across to London, oh, fifteen, twenty years ago it must be, that was the time when all the fashion and the rage was for the folk music, or what people were pleased to call folk music. There was hardly a pub in London with an upstairs room for hire that didn't have some class of folk club or other meeting there, and any fool with half a voice and enough gall could learn ten songs and get away with calling himself a folk singer. The McCarthy that was site agent of the first job I was on, he ran a club of his own above a pub behind Clapham Junction; I was down there myself a few times. The crack was fair enough, except the draught was thrown at you when they got busy, and that at a public bar price to equal most saloons round this way. But it was an awkward old journey, not far in distance, but awkward with the changing and that, and there were places every bit as good within walking distance of the digs here.

Anyway, the point I was wanting to make to you was that there was nobody more popular round the folk-singing clubs at that time than Irish Paddy, provided he laid off the Percy French and swore he got all his songs from his mother. And the most popular Irish Paddy of the lot of them was the boy with the rebel songs. Many's the time I've sat in one of these clubs and watched the young warriors strutting on the platform with the sleeves of their jumpers rolled back to the elbow because that's what the Clancy Brothers did, whaling the bejasus out of their guitars and proclaiming themselves to be the Boys of Wexford or asking in martial tones for the news from the bold Shelmalier with his long-barrel gun from the sea. Nine times out of ten when they made the announcements between songs they were pure Cockney, and this at a time when half the youth of Ireland were mad to get singing in a showband sounding like Jim Reeves or Frankie Laine. It was all you could do to keep a straight face. The entire town was infested with Behans and Dubliners and God knows what all. There was never a better time to be Irish in London, nor ever will be again. And on the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, do you know what they did? They had an entire programme on the English television on nothing but the old rebel songs, Erin go Bragh, I am a Jolly

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Ploughboy, Foggy Dew, Sergeant William Bailey Tooraloo, the blooming lot of them, all done by Irish singers. I ask you, could that happen today? It could not.

EVEN THE WORK is not the same today, and I don't just mean there's less of it about. What do these young fellows today know? The better part of them would be killed stone dead if they had to do a proper day's hard graft. What do they know or care about serving your time at a trade? If I was a piece of four by two, I would be insulted to have some of these cowboy chippies today so much as look at me. And what's worse, there is no character or spirit in them. When I was their age, you could find more characters on a single job than they could get together today from every site in London. Even Danny Lenihan that you can see any day of the week with the other dossers drinking their sherry and meths below the railway arches, even Danny has been man enough to go to hell in his own good time and no complaints, and in his younger days he could have given any of this crowd a half-mile start and a beating for character and spirit.

Block o' Wood, now, there was a character for you. Big Francie Power, to give him his right name, the best subbie me and Danny ever worked for. Never once failed to see us right. A very slow-spoken man and always the queer dead expression on his face the way you might think he was slow-witted if you didn't know him. Two Scotch boys that we done some roofs with, it was them first started calling him Block o' Wood behind his back, and the rest of us waiting for the balloon to go up when Francie caught them at it. He was bound to catch them sooner or later for, no matter how slow he might look, Francie Power had an eyes and an ears on him and missed nothing whatsoever. And for all that he was no longer young, he was not a man you would choose to anger, a great strong rawboned fellow that played for Tip in an all-Ireland final before the War. So when the evil thing finally happened you could have heard a pin drop, and the rest of us wondering whether the two Jimmies were going to be let keep their heads on their shoulders, but your man does nothing only let go a great laugh. 'Hurrah ha *ha*!' he cries, 'Block o' Wood! A name among names!' 'Oh, aye, ah, you're no offended then, Jimmy?' says one of the Scotch boys. 'Not a bit of it,' says your man as slow and pleasant as you like, 'a grand name, and long may I live to bear it. You're both sacked.' Anyway, nobody on a building site ever called him anything but Block o' Wood after that, and himself as happy as Larry about it. It suited him fine, do you see, for certain of the people he'd be doing business with to be thinking they were only dealing with a Tick Irish Paddy. Block o' Wood was nobody's fool, and that's a fact.

JESUS, THEY WERE some great times we used to see working for Block o' Wood. You never minded the graft when there was such great crack to go with it, and such desperate characters. Gauger Peasely, now, did you never meet the Gauger? Your life is the poorer for it, for there was never another man like him. 'After they made me, they broke the mould,' says the Gauger one time. 'Away,' says Danny Lenihan, 'it was making you that broke the poor bastard.' 'Not a bit of it,' says Block o' Wood, 'they broke the mould *before* they made him.' 'Ah, go and bah-boil yourselves,' says the Gauger. You could never call the Gauger a well-made man, at any road. A head on him like a small horse, and clapped on to the body of a lightweight jockey the way you'd swear they had a mix-up at the factory. He had a great harsh voice on him as rough as emery board, and a real terrible stutter. 'Gauger,' says Block o' Wood one day, 'there in your throat you have the world's one and only stuttering frog. Could you not train it to do a few circus tricks and live a life of ease yourself?' 'Ah, tah-tie a knot in yourself,' the Gauger says. Still, he was a good little grafter, only he was that wandery in his mind sometimes that you'd need the likes of Block o' Wood to be sure of getting a hand's turn out of him.

I remember one time when we were gutting the top two floors of a house in Canonbury on a flats conversion. We had a skip to fill in a bit of a hurry due to Block o' Wood being on a price to finish it that same day. We had a platform hoist up to a knocked-out window on the second floor and I was working that from above. You should always work a hoist from above the way you can see is there's anyone on the platform, but half these young know-alls today cannot be told and that's how most accidents happen, in my opinion. The Gauger was down on the ground and his job was to take the full barrow of rubbish for the skip off the hoist and put the barrow he'd already emptied to come back up on the platform. We'd worked up a good old rhythm and the job was going nice and smooth. A hard dirty job like that goes twice as easy if you get a rhythm going and never have to stop and think what to do next; you'd be surprised what a difference it makes. But of course if you once go and break that rhythm, there's hell to pay, and isn't that just what happened? It was maybe the fourth or fifth full barrow I sent down, and the Gauger himself already standing waiting with the empty one at the foot of the hoist. Well, the platform strikes the bottom with a great loud clatter as per usual, and myself with a hand on the lever ready to bring her straight back up the minute the Gauger has switched the barrows, but he makes no move whatsoever. At first I'm thinking he's maybe spotted something amiss with the hoist and I'm giving him a shout to ask what's the matter, but still he doesn't budge. Right you be, I'm thinking, if you want to play the giddy goat, here's one boy will let you get on with it, and I'm for lighting myself a fag while you sort yourself out. But pretty soon the rest of them above start giving it the loud bejasus and worse. The rhythm is broken to hell, do you see, with no barrow to cart away their rubbish from under their feet. And next thing there's Block o' Wood's great turnip head sticking out the top floor window, and him seeing straight off what the trouble is. 'Ahoy the Gauger!' he shouts. 'Is it counting the wheels on your bloody barrow you are, or what?' And *still* not a move from your man on the ground. Block o' Wood gives out a noise like a stallion spoiling for a fight and goes haring away down the stairs. Ah, Gauger dear, I'm thinking to myself, you are a dead man now. But just as Block o' Wood gets to the front door, the Gauger suddenly lets rip with a terrible yell that stops your man in his tracks. At first I was sure the Gauger was in mortal pain, but then I seen the great big grin on him as per usual and him giving me a small wink with the eye farthest from Block o' Wood. 'I have it, Tommy boy!' he roars up at me, 'I *hah-have* it! The winner of the One Thousand Guineas Stakes and not a shah-shadow of a doubt, and me with a memory like a garden riddle and nah-nothing to write with. Could you give me a lend of a pen, or a pah-pencil, or tah-two thousand pah-pounds?' And straight away all the rage in Block o' Wood comes out instead in a great hoot of a laugh, and he goes on laughing and laughing until the tears are streaming down his face and he's gasping for breath, and the Gauger all the while making out he thinks your man's gone demented.

BUT THE SPIRIT of the times is different altogether nowadays, and we all know what's at the back of that, don't we? For all that we mightn't talk about it, we all know what's at the back of that. Things are never going to be quite the same in our lifetime for the Irishman in London, not even in a place like this where there's never been any real bother. This was never really what you might call an Irish house. There's always been a steady Irish custom here, but it's been the class of Irish like myself who'd rather get away from the ceilidh bands and Provo raffles and auctions of autographed photos of the Price sisters you might have found not so long ago in certain upstairs rooms in pubs no great distance from here. But do you remember that time they put the bombs in those pubs in Birmingham and all those people were killed, young girls and everything blown to bits? Even in here there was a terrible atmosphere then. Fairly busy for the early evening when I came in, but the atmosphere was nobody's business. It was like everyone was forcing themselves to relax and enjoy the drink, but the falsehood of the enjoyment showed up in the quick nervous way they all turned their heads to see who it was every time the door went. Remember, this was at a time when there had already been bomb scares enough and real bombs too so that not only your Englishman was looking a bit chary at the stranger with the Irish accent, there was many a London Irishman with the self-same notion in his head. Myself, I was heartily sickened by that Birmingham business, and at a complete loss to know what I could possibly say in an Irish accent that would help things at all. I mean, what on earth could you say? There was a Dublin gobshite of a bar-cellarman working here at the time; he done a bunk not three weeks later at eight o'clock one night with ninety quid out the till, but that's another story. He had the running of this bar that evening until the part-timers came on at half past seven, and I swear to God you could count that man's brains on the fingers of one mitten. He was playing it for all he was worth to try and make out he was on the side of Right, that he was filled with the same righteous anger as what he seemed to think any Englishman would be. Hanging was too good for the murdering swine, tie them up to ten pounds of gelignite then light the fuse in front of their eyes, you know the class of talk, but all this in a Jackeen accent thick enough to bake bricks out of. You poor bloody donkey, I was thinking, you might as well up and give them a chorus of The Boys from the County Cork for all the good you're doing yourself or the atmosphere in here. I just kept myself to myself and stood having a read of the paper at the end

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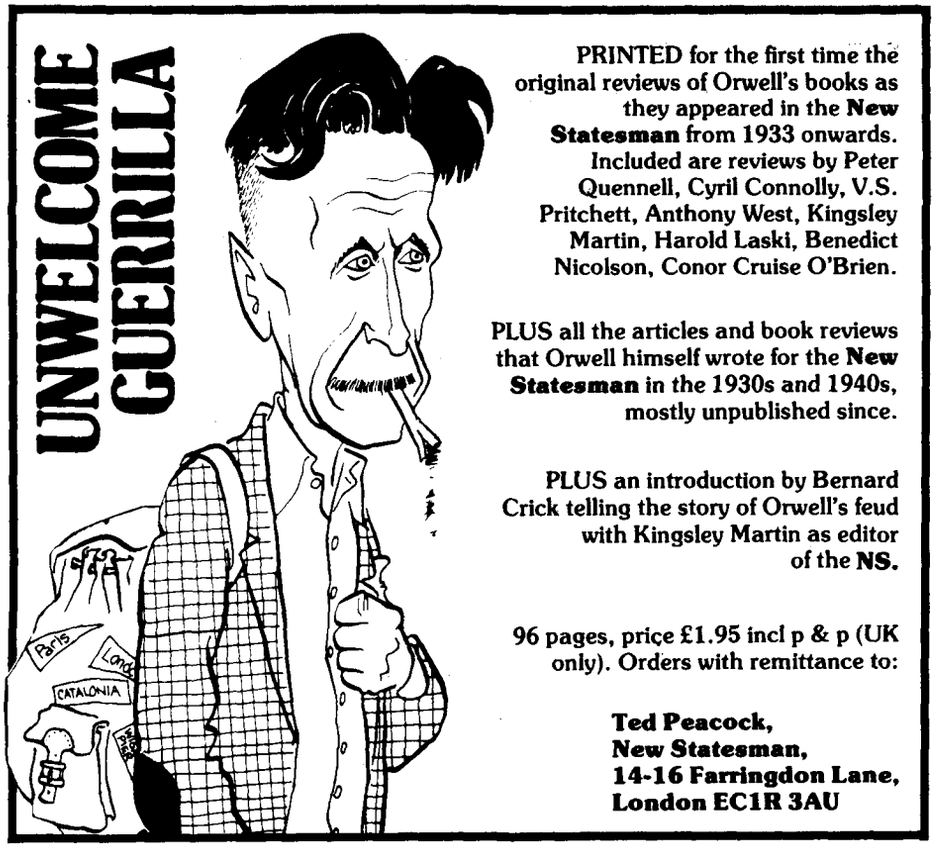
of the bar as per usual. The company was mostly in small groups of two or three, each group having its own conversation, no music or anything that early in the evening.

AND THEN Block o' Wood came in. Now at this time, you understand, I hadn't worked for Block o' Wood for maybe four or five years — no big split-up or ill feeling, mind, it was just that our two lives had gone along different ways. Any road, I wasn't all that surprised when your man walked straight past me without a word, for in the normal way we might not speak to each other once in a twelvemonth. I just went on with my reading and didn't see anything unusual in the way he walked down the bar and stood at the far end of the counter over there. But when I heard him order a brandy and port along with his pint, I had a good look at him, for that was something he only drank when he was on a skite. He looked to be far from sober, but he was behaving himself as nice as you like and I went back to my paper, not wanting to get involved. You can never tell when a man in drink might suddenly drag you into an argument, and I was never an argumental class of man.

Well, he just had the one pint, but he must have had four or five short ones in the half-hour he took to drink it and he had quite a sway on him by that time, leaning on the counter with his hands to steady himself. I'd thought he was getting ready to leave the way he put down his glass, but just then there was one of those little lulls in the general conversation of the bar and he spoke straight out into mid-air. 'Ireland,' says Block o' Wood, and the temperature in here went down ten degrees. He hadn't spoken that loud for him, but he had a deep boomy carrying class of voice and the whole room heard him. Your man was standing there staring into space and the rest of the company ignoring him as hard as they could; their own conversations had suddenly become utterly fascinating to them. But I was watching him all right, and I could see there was a tear running down his cheek, just the one tear. And I'm telling you, that one small drop of water transformed the big dead face of Block o' Wood into a mask, a mask of hurt. The life lighting up his eyes kept drifting away and then coming back again; it was like someone was working one of them dimmer switches inside his head. Oh Francie, I thought, I know where you are, poor man, for amn't I there myself? I could almost hear his poor befuddled brains trying to puzzle things out and set themselves to rest. The big rough farm boy from Tipperary, the brave Gaelic footballer, the hard man on the building site, the two-fisted fire-breathing drinking man, he had himself destroyed and defeated altogether trying to make some class of sense out of the world. All his spirit and his pride was awash in a flood of confusion and shame and helplessness, and him only adding to it by pouring a small ocean of drink on top of it.

The sway on him was getting pretty bad by now and I thought for a second he was going to fall down, but the light in his eyes came back on yet again and he spoke once more. 'Ireland,' he said loud and clear this time, 'will be *free*.' The whole bar was struck silent for a second and people sneaked looks at Block o' Wood out the corners of their eyes, then all the conversations started themselves up again with lots of extra tuttings and hissings to begin with. 'For God's sake, Francie, none of that in here,' says the gobshite, 'will I ring you a cab?' 'I can walk fine,' says Block o' Wood, squaring himself up to leave. Well, he got about halfway down the bar when his legs went, the way he could only save himself from falling by grabbing hold of the shoulder of the man next him, who happened to be Georgie Varley. Do you know Georgie? Big fat fellow keeps a lock-up wet fish shop near the post office. Now anyone with an ounce of sense knows the best way to handle a troublesome man far gone in drink is to jolly him out of it with smiles and pats on the back and such like. Normally, that's how they would have dealt with Block o' Wood, for he was well enough liked in here and a good spender, but, as I say, there was a terrible atmosphere in here that night. Instead of making some sort of joke out of it, Georgie just says very sharp, 'Leave it out!' Block o' Wood was leaning on him, swaying, trying to puzzle out what was going on. I maybe could have smoothed things over even then if I'd stepped in, but I'm ashamed to say I couldn't bring myself to do it. 'You,' says Block o' Wood to Georgie, 'I'll punch you right in the fucking nose!' '*Gerroff*,' says Georgie, giving a shrug, no more than a shrug. But Block o' Wood had already drawn his fist back and overdone it and the shrug was enough to destroy his balance entirely. He went teetering away across the room taking those stupid little drunk man's steps like his laces were tied together, weaving this way and that so he looked real comical but at the same time almost graceful like a dancer, and then he fell. He'd passed out cold on his feet, for he never lifted a finger to save himself, and his head came down a terrible bang on the glass front of the electric bandit. I went to help him then all right. He was spark out and twitching, and there was blood everywhere the way the Jackeen phoned for the ambulance straight off before he ever came round the bar to look. And it's a funny thing, but all the bad atmosphere went the second they could see how bad Block o' Wood was hurt. I heard afterwards he needed twenty-three stitches. Now it was easy to see that your man would have no memory of any of this when he woke up next day, and God knows what class of cock and bull story Danny Lenihan and the Gauger got, but the pair of them were in here two nights later looking for Georgie Varley to give him a good licking. It was all the landlady could do to talk sense into them, by all accounts. But Block o' Wood never again crossed that threshold, not even years later. He died not two months ago, you know, the old Block o' Wood. Heart gave up on him, and him not yet sixty.

WAS I TELLING you about the McCarthy's club in Clapham? The Crubeen, he used to call it, after the pig's trotter. There was a picture of a pig on the wall done in that powdery poster paint the kids use in school, a fine fat pink pig with a balloon coming out its mouth saying, 'Crubeen my foot.' I was on a demolition job in Lavender Hill last week, first time in years and years I was down that way, and I thought I'd maybe have a pint in that pub for old times sake. And do you know what? I couldn't even find the blooming street. Acres and acres ripped down and buried under tower blocks and primary schools and new old people's places and them queer shops and libraries and such that look like glorified greenhouses. And not done recently, either. There was a young fellow there selling fruit off a barrow and I tried to explain to him what I was looking for. 'Never happened, John,' he says, 'no way. Lived round here all my life, ain't I? Never nothing like that round here.' True what they say: all the same in a hundred years. It's a hard life, sure enough, but it's the only one there is. □



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GREEN POLITICS
Martin Shaw

Paradoxy

Fighting for Hope
PETRA KELLY *Chatto* £6.95 & £2.95

Petra Kelly is the best known leader of a movement which doesn't believe in leaders and of a party which defines itself as 'anti-party'. As those who have followed the progress of the German Greens will know, her position has led to some controversy with her comrades. This book, marketed as 'her personal manifesto', could well add fuel to these flames. But it could also prove how useful a 'star' can be to an emerging political force.

At first glance this collection of occasional speeches, lectures and articles seems as hastily put together as that of any conventional politician venturing into the literary field. If one wanted to be unkind, there are the usual tautologies to be picked on: 'The destruction of mankind is the most heinous crime against humanity imaginable.' But most of us, if placed on the platform at a demonstration, are capable of equal banality in describing the indescribable.

The book gains depth as it moves from general pronouncements of Green philosophy to more specific — and personal — statements about chemicals and cancer, love and sexuality. Yet throughout, if we imagine Petra Kelly declaiming her words, we can get the measure of a political force which — as the Euro-elections showed — is gaining momentum across the Continent.

What is in one sense a contradiction — the 'anti-party party' — is, Petra Kelly shows, a fundamental source of strength to the Greens, who combine the moral fervour and activism of the anti-nuclear movement with an involvement in the parliamentary arena. It is important to note the shift here — 15 years ago Petra Kelly's generation (but not Kelly herself) were creating an 'extra-parliamentary opposition'. Now the radicalism operates at two levels and is the more effective for it.

Petra Kelly herself comes from the American tradition of 'non-ideological radicalism' — she worked for Robert Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey in the late Sixties — rather than the more theoretical German student Left of that time. She inveighs against 'ready-made ideologies', seeing them as a source of destruction and aggression. Instead she advocates a non-violent 'eco-feminism' — loosely defined, surely, but perhaps the more politically responsive for that.

What Petra Kelly offers are the themes and issues of the ecology, peace and women's movements, powerfully blended. She has little for the workers — while praising Polish Solidarity she enthuses about 'self-determination and self-government', but there are no suggestions for applying them to industry. Although she seems to approve of 'socialism with a human face', a 'leftish-ecological front' is only possible if we accept that 'ecology must take priority over the economy'.

That these are more than slogans is shown by the moving indictment of our carcinogenic industrial culture which fills much of the second half of this book. But, as slogans, they are obviously just as one-sided as the naive calls for economic expansion which are the staple of the labour movement. They help explain why the Greens, for all their impressive advance, are likely to remain a minority force in West Germany, probably within the 5-10% voting range they have now reached.

The publication of Petra Kelly's writings in Britain is itself a political event, and probably a timely one. If Labour's leadership fudges over Polaris and over-compensates for nuclear disarmament by embracing high levels of conventional military spending, our still rather lonely Greens will have some ready-made issues.

Underlying these are the failure of both Labour and Alliance clearly to stake out environmental concern. Although a Friends of the Earth survey gave candidates of both parties an 88% 'correct' rating in the Euro-elections, no British politician has expressed the issues with anything remotely resembling Petra Kelly's force and conviction.

Britain's Greens could take votes on the Left and, while not winning seats themselves, deprive Labour of some it needs to win. They pose a challenge to Labour's New Left, which must show that it goes beyond supporting CND to a willingness truly to fight for an ecologically responsible society. Otherwise we may soon be asking: who will be Britain's Petra Kelly? □

Lotte Kramer

On shutting the door

Often, when I leave home,
I think of you,
How you'd have shut the door
That last time
They fetched you out at dawn.

What fears would prophesy,
What intimations
Could foretell the terrors
Of those plains,
The herding into ash?

Or maybe, you looked round
As if before
A holiday, leaving
No trace of dust,
No crumbs for pests, no moths

In cupboards, carpets;
Covered the chairs,
The settee from the glare
Of light and sun,
Turned off the water, gas...

MEMOIRS
Adrianne Blue

Minding

Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre
SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR trans. PATRICK O'BRIAN
Deutsch/Weidenfeld £14.95
Simone de Beauvoir Today
ALICE SCHWARZER trans. MARIANNE HOWARTH *Chatto* £6.95 & £2.95

The ruthlessness with which Simone de Beauvoir documents Sartre's deterioration is, at first, appalling. The puddle of piss he leaves on a chair is recorded. So is the dribble on his shirt. Nothing is shameful to de Beauvoir if it is true: the ugliest, the least dignified truth is beauty.

The staccato rat-a-tat of the years of Sartre's faltering final decade, 1970-1980, shatters our and the 19th-century's obsession with immutable Grecian urns, with adolescent 'perfection', with euphemism. This book is an extraordinary achievement, precisely the right encomium for a man whose passion was mind.

Sartre's was not a very easy death:

> He had seen specialists who had examined his eyes, ears, skull, and brain — no less than eleven consultations. They had detected grave disturbances in the circulation in the left hemisphere of his brain... and a narrowing of the blood vessels.

Beyond that, he had a recurrent abscess in his mouth and flu; there had been a stroke. 'But it was with joy and delight that he delivered the huge manuscript of Flaubert.' Thus, 1970.

Soon, the triumphs become smaller: on tottering legs he makes a political appearance, he 'gives' interviews, he signs petitions, he defines his attitude to violence.

'One morning, as he lit his first cigarette, he said to me, "I can't work any more... I'm gaga, as they say." ' They went immediately to the doctor who said Sartre's reflexes were good. But 'Sartre complained of his numbness of mind... he said, "I'm not stupid. But I'm empty." '

Neither of them ever shies from truth, even when the terse, almost too scrupulous diary which makes up the first third of this 450-page book, and which mentions even the deathbed gangrene and her own drunkenness, gives way to the conversations.

Taped in 1974 after blindness made it impossible for him to write, they show her to be as relentless an interrogator as she is a diarist. Sartre talks about politics, literature, sex. He reveals his lifelong alienation from his own body and the self-doubt engendered by the fact that he was 'quite happy naked in bed with a naked woman, caressing and kissing her, but without going as far as the sexual act'. No phallocrat, this Sartre, and probably a better lover than he knew.

What interested him more was intellectual intercourse, and he pursued it with the devotion of any other sort of satyr, abusing amphetamines for 20 years to heighten his

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experience. *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* was written on speed. 'There was something of a depraved pleasure... I used to take not one tablet... but ten each time.' He knew, he says, he was trading off years with Death. The French Faustus.

He speaks of himself and she speaks of him as a man of genius and one looks for irony, but there is none. Yet why should there be? If gangrene is mentionable, surely so is genius. The one arrogance of *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre* is that the reader is presumed to recognise the names of the charmed circle of friends. Clearly, neither the French nor the British publisher dared step on literary lioness de Beauvoir's paw, but a glossary of names would make later editions more accessible.

The important 'I am a feminist' interview, which first appeared in 1972 in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, begins Alice Schwarzer's estimable little book of half-a-dozen interviews conducted with de Beauvoir over ten years. Only 120 pages, this book is as concentrated as frozen orange juice and far more nutritious. It makes a fine de Beauvoir primer. Even old de Beauvoir hands will find this succinct statement and evolution of her views, particularly on feminist issues, useful.

De Beauvoir's career has not lacked controversy. *The Second Sex* (1949), the book which transformed her from an obscure academic into a best-selling if notorious writer, is the founding work of contemporary feminism. Oddly, it was not until more than two decades later that de Beauvoir, giving up on her belief in socialism arriving first, joined the women's movement, becoming its most distinguished recruit. She marched in Paris in a pro-abortion demonstration and admitted publicly that she had had an abortion which was, at the time, illegal in France. In the 1970s, Schwarzer, an able journalist, now West Germany's pre-eminent feminist, was there on the Parisian barricades with de Beauvoir. In their talks here, de Beauvoir tells us in precis what she has written elsewhere about motherhood, marriage, old age. What is new is her view of sexuality.

Like Sartre, she was in love with the life of the mind: 'My head has always exerted a stronger pull on me than my body.' But if she had her memoirs to do over again, she would give 'a frank and balanced account of my own sexuality... because it is not just a personal matter but a political one too'.

And if she had her life to live over, she would be more embracing: 'Women should not let themselves be conditioned exclusively to male desire any more. And in any case, I think that these days every woman is a bit... a bit homosexual. Quite simply because women are more desirable than men.'

As both these books show, Simone de Beauvoir remains, even as a septuagenarian, a very spunky activist and intellectual. Long may she spit in propriety's eye. □

Among this week's contributors:

MARTIN SHAW lectures in sociology at Hull University and recently edited *War, State and Society* (Macmillan), which will be reviewed shortly in the *NS*.

HARRIETT GILBERT's *The Riding Mistress* has recently been published in paperback by Methuen.

FICTION
Harriett Gilbert

Echo chamber

Swallow
D.M. THOMAS *Gollancz* £8.95
Him with his Foot in his Mouth
SAUL BELLOW *Alison Press/Secker* £8.95
A Measure of Time
ROSA GUY *Virago* £9.95 & £3.95

Whatever else may be said of D.M. Thomas, he certainly knows how to stir up the literary shit. My dentist, who is Jewish, nearly rammed the drill through my windpipe when describing his reaction to *The White Hotel*: its detailed, almost loving account of the massacre at Babi Yar was perceived by him as a pornographic insult to those whom the Nazis butchered there.

Others were more outraged by what they saw as that passage's plagiarism (from the writer Anatoli Kuznetsov), while others, me included, have been generally upset by Thomas's female characters. From his first novel, *The Flute-Player*, to last year's outpouring, *Ararat*, their primary function seems to have been as receptacles for brutality.

Swallow is *Ararat*'s sequel: number two in a threatened sequence 'of improvisational novels... [concerning] the mysterious way in which a word, an image, a dream, a story, calls up another, connected yet independent'. But if *Ararat*'s improvisations felt like a pointlessly nasty game, those in the new book begin to acquire a not uninteresting purpose. From his 'Author's Note' on, Thomas is challenging his critics. What, he is asking, does plagiarism mean when *all* stories are triggered off by something the author has heard or read? And why, come to that, do we place so much value on words that are fixed to a page?

It now transpires that the stories-within-stories of *Ararat* were being told by Corinna Riznich, an Italian *improvisatrice*, as her contribution to the final heat of a story-telling Olympiad. The judges of the contest represent the 'detached' voice of literary criticism but, in his many-layered narrative (of which the judges' meditations, the second part of Corinna's story, some of the other finalists' stories, Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and the author's own adolescence form part), Thomas shows how the critics, too, are enmeshed in the common fantasies, symbols and myths of the story-tellers. The world of the imagination (unlike that of nationalistic or cold-war, East-West politics) is not disfigured by boundaries. Its language is universal.

At the same time, we all of us speak it differently. And, despite an integrity more obvious than in his earlier books, Thomas's accent still jars. Making his principal character a woman is a facile response to feminist quarrels with his work—his female characters still live only as breasts and cunts to be conquered. An anti-nuclear-war theme is invoked with embarrassing gaucheness; a narrative poem (17 pages) reads like a car engine failing to start. Thomas is certainly more original than some of his detractors maintain, but his shocks to the system are still too like those of a consciously outrageous adolescent.

The five stories in Saul Bellow's **Him with his Foot in his Mouth** have a more solid, responsible feel. This is not to imply that they're solemn: Bellow's humour threads through his works with an athlete's effortless strength. It is rather that he is trying to resolve the probably unanswerable question of how a thoughtful American (artist; intellectual) can decently live in the second half of this century.

Their nostrils twitching with the heady smells of cerebral discovery, their ankles bound by affectionate commitment to the gangsters and hustlers to whom, by their history, they are tied, Bellow's protagonists struggle like great, chained bears. In the title story, the narrator suffers illegal exile in Canada, his incidental financial success as the writer of a musical biography having been disastrously exploited by his family -- a process in which he has half-colluded by paying more attention to the workings of his mind than to money or worldly achievement. The hero of 'Cousins', another intellectual, 'a man who was not concerned with the world's work in any category which made sense', is similarly torn and abused.

The danger with likeable, 'sensitive', polymathic heroes is that, like Salinger's Seymour Glass, they will finally make one puke. Nausea does indeed threaten in 'What Kind of Day Did you Have?' — but is gradually abated by Bellow's confrontation of his genius Victor Wulpy with a woman whose very different perceptions are presented with a generosity from which D.M. Thomas might learn. Rich with informed curiosity, this collection confirms (were confirmation needed) Bellow's prodigious reputation.

America reappears as the subject of Rosa Guy's **A Measure of Time**. In many ways, it's the same country — one where the only rule is material success — but Guy's hero is less free to question the value of measuring up. When Dorine Davis leaves Alabama for the Harlem of the 1920s, she is striding not only from stomach-gnawing poverty, but the long, Klan-whispering, rope-swinging shadow of slavery.

Clasping the money that white Master Norton has been paying to rape her since she was ten (' "Ten years!" He let go of me, put his hands on the wheel, letting them rest there. "Is that how old you are sure 'nough?" I breathed with relief. But too soon.') Dorine sets out to remake her life the only way she knows how: by buying the clothes, the cars, the men that will make her feel in control. Through the Depression, the Second World War, into the 1950s, she clings with hard, polished fingernails to some kind of sense of herself.

Guy is one of the finest writers of US 'young adult' fiction. To this, her first book for adults, she brings the same unsparing anger, narrative drive and self-confidence. *A Measure of Time* has the form and style of a good-old-historical-romance, but behind Dorine's Scarlett O'Hara career (both *Gone with the Wind* and Doctorow's *Ragtime* are echoed to subversive effect), the voice of black American rebellion grows stronger and stronger on the streets. That Dorine cannot listen is her tragedy. That we are forced to is Guy's success. □

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A Leg to Stand On

OLIVER SACKS *Duckworth* £8.95

A panic-stricken doctor, confronted by a basking bull, tears a muscle in his leg while bolting down a Norwegian mountain. He is flown home and his injury is repaired. He then begins a more terrible descent. 'An abyss' engulfs him and he 'feels as if he had fallen off the map, the world of the Knowable'. Why he is so upset is because, although his leg is still demonstrably attached to the rest of him, he suspects that he has 'lost it' and 'become an amputee'. He has dreadful dreams and worse awakenings, when he experiences 'qualms of horror' at the prospect of never glad confident walking again. Surprised, after his plaster is removed, not to be confronted by 'a mass of rotting chicken bones' he in fact gets back on his feet to the accompaniment of Mendelssohn's violin concerto.

This is a book before which, so impressive are the author's medical and literary credentials, the reader feels he ought to stand stiffly to attention. And yet, as hyperbole is piled on hyperbole and allusion on allusion, the sceptic may suspect that what he is confronted with is not, as the author argues, an example of a widely shared experience, but an entirely idiosyncratic reaction.

Only with his observations on the alienation of the hospital patient — 'I have become a pigmy, an inmate, a prisoner' — can we all unreservedly sympathise, although even here he raises doubts about his sense of proportion when he suggests that the incurable sick inspire such 'horror and fear' that they cannot, for the world's sake, be let out of hospital.

Dr Sacks's conclusion, that the patient's lot would be a happier one if surgeons were sensitive intellectuals, would be more acceptable if their patients only *thought* that they had lost their legs. For those who are in actual danger of losing them, such people might prove less satisfactory than robust and careful craftspeople.

Bruce Hepburn

The Black Death

ROBERT S. GOTTFRIED *Robert Hale* £9.95

Nothing in living memory equals the Black Death of 1347-51 for horrifying suddenness and pervasiveness. The agents of Pope Clement VI calculated that about 30 per cent of the population — nearly 24 million people — died. The plague victim had a scant day or two between the first symptom and death. It is no wonder the survivors thought they had been visited by the vengeance of God.

This absorbing biography of an epidemic is perhaps the answer to Philip Ziegler's invitation in his 1969 survey, *The Black Death*, for a professional historian to write a thorough history of the disease. Professor Gottfried puts the Black Death in its economic, sociological, meteorological, demographical and ecological context. It was the first and the worst of a long cycle of plague outbreaks after a stable period of several centuries in Western Europe of no serious diseases except leprosy. Once established in a place, the plague recurred every few years for the next century or more, never again quite so virulent, but still taking 10 or 15 per cent of the population with it at each visitation.

In the first shock of the calamity, 'the mechanics and commonplaces of everyday life simply stopped', but when life resumed there were changes everywhere — in art, in attitudes of mind, in farming and business and in medicine. The failure of 14th-century medicine to have any effect on the Black Death led to a less theoretical and more practical attitude towards disease. For the first time hospitals tried to cure patients instead of merely isolating them, and clinical observation, as pioneered at the University of Padua, led fairly directly to modern experimental science and the important notion of formulating and testing hypotheses.

Gottfried wisely warns against imagining that everything that happened after the plague was caused by it, but 'the Black Death and the other plague epidemics of the late Middle Ages had the crucial effect of telescoping change'. Most of the changes were on their way in any case, but Gottfried explains in convincing detail why 'the Black Death should be ranked as the greatest biological-environmental event in history, and one of the major turning points of Western Civilization'.

Sarah Lawson

Wilfrid Israel: German Jewry's Secret Ambassador

NAOMI SHEPHERD *Weidenfeld* £12.95

Wilfrid Israel became the millionaire inheritor of the vast Berlin emporium of N. Israel, which Chaim Weizmann described as 'something like Harrods here, but older established'. The firm's prestige and its network of wholesale and retail contacts all over Germany and eastern Europe protected Wilfrid and his Jewish employees until late on in the Nazi persecution. By information from many sources, especially from underground organisations whose members had been arrested, transported and imprisoned, Wilfrid knew, sooner than most, what was happening in the concentration camps. He was prepared to use, and publish, three words not then considered acceptable, 'deportation', 'annihilation' and 'extermination'. His privileged position enabled him to represent the Jewish cause and to arrange the exodus of Jews to Palestine. When he himself was forced to leave Germany, he came to England to continue his work and was eventually killed in a plane crash when returning from Portugal where he had been organising ways of rescuing Jewish children who had survived the oppression of the SS and Gestapo in Germany and France.

Naomi Shepherd has written a brisk, business-like, well-documented biography of this little known man who was the model for Bernhard Landauer in Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*. She concludes justly that Wilfrid Israel 'never wholly freed himself of the attitudes of his class' but 'demonstrated its chief virtue: the sense of the iron obligation of service'.

Brian Martin

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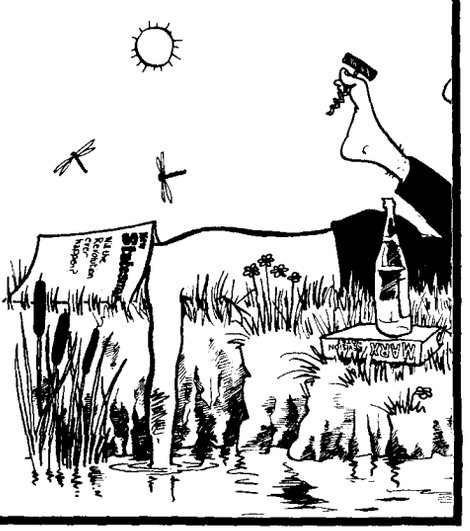

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FILMS
John Coleman

Bed and bard

Monsieur Ladmiral and daughter during a Sunday tasteful Sunday in the country

Reuben, Reuben (15)
Warner; Screen on Baker Street; etc.
Splash (PG)
Odeon, Leicester Square
Sunday in the Country (PG)
Chelsea Cinema
One Deadly Summer (18)
Premiere
Sans Soleil
ICA
Angelo, My Love (15)
Classic, Tottenham Court Road

Never mind that Peter De Vries's novel took its title from an old song. In Robert Ellis Miller's **Reuben, Reuben**, the song has become an on-screen mop-headed dog with a crucial role in the action: that's show business.

And really the damnably funny Mr De Vries has been far worse served in the past than by this Julius J. Epstein script, mainly but not crassly drawn from the 90-odd-page middle section of the novel. Lean back, rather, and enjoy a splendidly sad-eyed and unshaven performance by Tom Conti, cawing away as drunken, womanising Scottish poet Gowan McGland, wowing the bored wives of a New England commuter community by his readings and bed-rumpled reputation, a poor man's Dylan Thomas (if Thomas himself wasn't that some time before *his* end) who hasn't written a line in five years. Gowan's best lines now are sardonic, socially observant and outrageous, and mostly from De Vries. He admires the grey coiffure of his current mistress's husband: 'Did you decorate the house around him?'; notes the prevalence of '-ish' and 'sort of' as linguistic tics; more broadly, responds to the local priest's 'We want you to feel a member of our congregation' with 'Certainly, who is she?'.

This Gowan, eternally broke, also nips back into restaurants to palm his host's tips, suffers from an arthritic neck which necessitates some hanging gear that looks like a suicide's kit and — above all — fears losing the last of his teeth. Conti brilliantly copes with the transition from comedy set up by these shifts and misgivings into something unfunny and despairing, a sense of *sunt lacrimae rerum*, and this without forfeiting our interest in seedy Gowan. He falls, of course, for a beautiful young girl, Geneva (appealing Kelly McGillis), and forms of retribution spring from the wings, his personalised Furies. The interpolated, doggy irony of a last downfall seems an ingenious mistake, but this is a witty and unusually literate entertainment, with a cluster of nicely judged performances around the wrecking presence of Conti's poet run dry.

Much slighter is the genial **Splash**, financed by Disney Studios' distribution set-up, Buena Vista, and directed by Ron Howard, best remembered for *Night Shift*. A mermaid rescues a love-lorn fellow from drowning off Cape Cod and, smitten by him, emerges from the river in New York, naked and with tail metamorphosed into legs. She has used a map from a sunken galleon to chart her passage: the underwater scenes are persuasive and pleasant. Mute at first (her real name is a glass-shattering shriek), she learns English from TV screens in a day, christens herself Madison after a street-sign, and hurls herself with sexual abandon at a bemused, enthralled Allen (Tom Hanks). Daryl Hannah manages the shapely innocence, as well as the swimming, with some craft; Eugene Levy is an accident-prone scientist resolved to prove her a mermaid, something unsuspected by Allen, by bucket or by hose; other zany characters get snappy lines. Inventive in development, with moments of high comedy and bearable pathos.

Bertrand Tavernier's **Sunday in the Country**, scripted by the director and his wife Colo from a Pierre Bost novel, shows its fictional source by some intrusive, because generally jarring, voice-over explanations. But it is a piece of authentic and unashamed charm, delicate emotional shadings, exquisite photography (Bruno de Keyzer) and ensemble playing, catching — as it were — in amber a sunny autumnal day in 1912, when septuagenarian Monsieur Ladmiral (the distinguished stage actor Louis Ducreux at 73) receives an expected visit at his sprawling country house from son, prim daughter-in-law and their three kids, an unexpected one from his beloved daughter Irène (Sabine Azéma), driving down from her boutique in Paris.

The old man is a traditionalist painter, who admired Cézanne, Van Gogh, Monet — 'perhaps I lacked courage' — but returns again and again to canvases of corners of his studio and of his gardens. His wife's ghost comes visibly haunting, unremarked, two or three times, as do two little skipping girls, unseen by the rest. Family resentments flare and subside; Irène keeps ringing a lover's number in anguish, finally rushing back to him and Paris with a booty of shawls and garments disinterred from the attic for her shop; old Ladmiral, elegiacally accompanied by Fauré chamber music on the sound track, is left alone, very alone with his loyal housekeeper. It is cinematic Impressionism in great good taste, constantly holding the eye and ear: just. Cannes gave it the award for best director.

But then Jean Becker's **One Deadly Summer**, at 130 minutes a needlessly faithful rendering of a Sébastian Japrisot thriller, won four French Oscars, one of them — incredibly — for best editing. Quite bedevilled by sundry voice-overs and nudging flashbacks, the occasion centres on a sun-drenched Provençal village and flaunting Isabelle Adjani coming on like a bad memory of *Tobacco Road*, all short skirts and shorter expletives, daughter of a German woman and her crippled husband. Oddly inquisitive about a player-piano in a neighbouring barn, this Eliane or 'Elle' moves in with the nice elder son of the barn-owning family, persuades him into marriage, then skips off, all with an avenging end in view. Suzanne Flon enchants as a deaf aunt, the village comes fairly alive, the plot curvets crazily. Up to you, but be warned — it's a long haul.

Summary justice: Chris Marker is the maverick who has made such wonderful part-essay, part-document films as *Le Joli Mai* and *Letter from Siberia* and the one-off S-F-in-stills *La Jetée*. His kaleidoscopic **Sans Soleil**, again masquerading as a film 'letter' or diary, narrated by Alexandra Stewart, left me — alas — prickly with irritation: some amusing fragments, mainly from Japan, are submerged by a prevailing pretentiousness. Robert Duvall's free-form gypsies-in-New York **Angelo, My Love** is rumbustious, terribly noisy, surely well-meaning, with the resistible eight-year-old lad of the title strutting his stuff at the centre. Maybe a straight documentary would have touched the gypsy in *my* soul more nearly. □

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THEATRE
Naseem Khan

Go-getting

Golden Girls
LOUISE PAGE *The Other Place*
Mary's Men
SEAMUS FINNEGAN *Drill Hall*
On Your Toes
RODGERS and HART *Palace*
The Spanish Tragedy
THOMAS KYD *Lyttelton*

The acting area is dark and empty. But along the back, at irregular intervals, track-suited figures flash indistinctly past. Lights play fitfully on the wire-mesh screen behind which they are running, up and down, and from the soundtrack comes the vastly amplified harsh sound of breathing. Over the top a voice mutters, 'Go for it! Go for it! Go for it!'

The tenseness and self-absorption of the image go to the heart of Louise Page's new play **Golden Girls**. Set in the rarefied world of competitive sports, it follows the development of a women's relay team from an inchoate collection of gifted individuals into a single winning unit.

Why has success eluded them so far? It's not for lack of wanting it. Each of the initially-four-girl team has sacrificed much — homes, security, emotional ties — to run. The missing ingredient is, in fact, cash. And it's the golden shower from their new sponsors, Ortolan, that starts to change their luck. It buys them time to train together, the full-time services of a woman doctor specialising in athletics and unlimited material goodies on their charge accounts. In return, of course, Ortolan, in the person of their hard-eyed lady executive, demands winners, and winners that will fit the image of their principal product, Golden Girls shampoo: no scandals, no unseemly behaviour, 'wholesome... real girls'.

It would have been easy for Louise Page to have written a simple play about the evils of big business corrupting the purity of sport. Certainly the purchase of people comes in for some stick, but not so much through the runners, who retain minds of their own, as through the largely silent figure of the Golden Girl. A living breathing figurehead for Ortolan — a glossy, glowing blonde in butter-yellow sports gear — she has no other name. Her job is simply to pose vacuously, on the edges of the action. *Golden Girls*, however, goes further than this valid though limited point.

Within the broad expanse of the play and its running tensions — who will be dropped to make a four-person team? Will they set a new record? — Louise Page deftly weaves together a great deal of material. A lot of it is personal, human, funny: her characters are vivid and credible. Through them other issues emerge — the lowly status of sport in general, particularly when faced with the massive state sponsorship of eastern bloc countries; the Cinderella status of women's sports and the pressures on the women, and racism.

But, above all, it is about the same kind of almost feral drive that she observed recently in *Real Estate*. It is not only the girls who possess it: in its purest form, the urge to experience, as one of them haltingly describes it at the end, just five minutes of perfection. Their backers have it too — the doctor intent on a university chair, the executive intent on a seat on a multinational board. Rarely have we seen a play that deals so openly and so objectively with that forbidden subject, female ambition. And equally refreshingly, the play celebrates comradeship.

Barry Kyle's first-rate production balances the broad sweep of the play and the detail within it. Performances, particularly by the runners (three black and two white), are excellent. And the play included the best use of strobe lights — to help simulate the stylised grace of the girls' winning race — that I have ever seen.

Louise Page's girls smell glory even though finally it evades them. No such luck for Seamus Finnegan's collection of Belfast down-and-outs observed in **Mary's Men** as they gather nightly in the Roman Catholic doss house that counts for home. 'The conditions were not right,' says one of them vaguely, 'for a blooming to occur.' Nevertheless, they have their pride and their memories of past illusory fame — as boxer, banker, IRA fighter — which they recount in set pieces. The point of this rich, absurd play is not so much the events — the men come and go; one is accidentally blown up; there is a wake — as the glimpse it gives you of characters stubbornly refusing to be tipped off into disaster.

Julia Pascal's production gives a harsh surreal gloss to the piece, so that both tramps and administrators hover between grotesqueness and humanity. All look alike, in dusty black suits and unreal whited faces. Performances are crisp and stylised, interspersed with mockingly precise sections of music-hall dance or poetry. The set, by Claire Lyth, resembles a sarcophagus. This, with the dead make-up of the men, gives you the curious impression of watching a performance from underground.

On Your Toes, on the other hand, hardly touches ground at all. A revival of the 1936 Rodgers and Hart Broadway musical, it is one of the most exhilarating pieces of theatre around. The story, of course, is rot. College professor and dancer-manqué becomes involved with the New York Russian ballet — and its prima ballerina — which eventually stages the jazz ballet of one of his students with the professor in the lead. But in that slight framework you get witty performances, infectious music and, particularly in 'Slaughter on Tenth Avenue', ripping routines. The queen of it all must be Natalia Makarova playing the sultry temperamental temptress (and dancing exquisitely too). But the energy comes from the explosive mixture when jazz meets classical ballet and a new, confident fusion springs out white-hot.

You will need a strong stomach for **The Spanish Tragedy**, Kyd's 16th-century shocker, now revived by Michael Bogdanov. Revenge tragedies must have been something like disaster movies in their time: the greater the horror, the longer the queues. This one is a humdinger — blood spurts out in fountains, a tongue is bitten out on stage and ordinary dead bodies are a dime a dozen. For all that, Michael Bogdanov gives it a sombre doom-laden production, with the mocking figure of Revenge (a lightly sardonic performance by Peter Needham) in constant attendance providing an effective distancing device. The play itself undoubtedly has much energy and invention, as well as historical interest, but I would rather have been at home with a steak. □

DANCE
Stephanie Jordan

Nudge, nudge

Dutch National Ballet
Coliseum
Laurie Booth
ICA

It was either brave or misguided of the Dutch National Ballet to rely entirely on the work of one resident choreographer for its first visit to London in ten years (other than as Nureyev back-up). But Hans van Manen has acquired an impressive reputation; indeed, we already know several of his works including those presented by the Royal Ballet.

It is clear from the Coliseum programmes that there is a modicum of consistency in his work. The repertoire focused largely on the war between man and woman: aggressive, vicious attractions and repulsions. It *could* be artistically acceptable for a choreographer to spend so much time depicting the sexes at loggerheads, but van Manen's handling of the subject is hard to justify. It is unsavoury on all accounts, a world of the perennially aching crotch, the male member the centre of the universe, rape simulation made explicit, glances and innuendos galore. *Pointes* and the odd wink at ballet vocabulary ensure respectability lest we forget this is art. It is pseudo-serious stuff aimed at new audiences with high incomes and low artistic expectations. Sustained choreographic invention, the flow of movement phrase are totally absent.

All these choreographic ingredients, or their lack, were evident in **Situation** (1970), set to van Manen's own *musique concrète*. The scene is a graph-papered box set with digital clock, an uncompromising arena for the presentation of a series of blunted relationships between the same and opposite sexes. In the recent **Piano Variations II-IV**, van Manen employs a variety of major modern piano scores: Prokofiev, Satie, Debussy, irrelevant to his purpose, though he grabs the opportune gesture or loud chord to reinforce his own statement. Two duets are offered, one mocking and sexually violent, the other a circus combination of tall man manipulating a tough tiny girl, while piano and pianist are wheeled about behind. With a larger group of dancers on stage, the rate of invention slows almost to a

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standstill. A phalanx of harpies in stilettos struts, squats and ogles its prey, first one, then a number of lustful males. All behave as if lacking any sense of the ridiculous.

The fact that there are no programme notes on the dancers reinforces the anonymous nature of the work. The only people we remember are seen under freak conditions: the Oriental Caroline Iura, the smallest dancer by far, or the guest modern dancer Pauline Daniëls. She appears in **Portrait**, smoking a cigarette and pursued by a hand-held spotlight that identifies every muscle on an exceptionally muscular physique.

TIME was better spent last week at the ICA watching the wayward, abundant imagination and commitment of Laurie Booth. He is undoubtedly one of the most exquisite and original movers on the British stage today. The title **Animal (Parts)** suggests something of the content of Booth's new work, broadly a demonstration of humanity's relationship with the animal world. Animals are seen as being on the run from humans: domesticated, imprisoned, incarcerated and tortured by and for them. Obvious from the screen images of Hiroshima and missiles (lighting and effects by Steve Whitson), humanity is a bad lot. Neither is it cleverer or more sophisticated than animals, judging by the home movies taken at London Zoo of herds of gibbering, clapping spectators at penguin pool and lion house.

The first part of the work keeps to its theme: squeaky toys set around the stage, orchestrated into an overture; the Regents Park movie and slides of animal experimentation; Laurie's danced narrative of the fauna that live by a river in the Kalahari Desert, a funny juxtaposition of extraordinary movement and patter, the now extended version of what was a perfect gala item at last year's Riverside Benefit. At the end of the act, the squeaky toys are picked out and disposed of by Laurie's composer/musician/cinemateuse Plumelia Hairart in white coat. We have come to look afresh upon these animal images: real animals dignified in suffering, objects of sympathy. Improvising into a muffling pillow, Laurie re-enacts an oddly familiar game from humanity's own age of childish innocence.

The second half is less coherent — starting with a monologue delivered by Laurie as the beastly Ray Kroc, ruthless American fast-food tycoon, and slides of battery chickens being de-beaked, then endless dancing bearing little perceptible link with the theme against distorted jumbled images from any evening's TV viewing, a barrage that makes even Pamela Armstrong look sinister.

Ultimately, the work is ill-focused, a vaguely anti-establishment, anti-vivisection tract with Laurie bounding about in front. Though it is comforting to know that his heart is correctly situated, it is his theatricality in speech and movement that is captivating, and his exceptional poise as a performer who thrives in a state of upturn and imbalance. One advantage of this piece is in allowing us to observe a wider range of his dancing theatricality than hitherto. The dances are unusually distinct. But to sustain interest through 90 minutes, he needs to tighten and better integrate the statements that circumscribe his eminently watchable acrobatic energy. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Talky & Co

MAIN-CHANCE TV, as defined by Tom Stoppard on **The Late Clive James** (C4), is a cop show where one cop is blond and the other dark; that way nothing is left to chance or the rival sponsor's shoot-out. He seemed to think it was an American phenomenon. Making her rounds of the booze-shows last week, Jackie Collins, writer sister of Joan, dropped in on the new main-chance chatterama **Aspel & Co** (ITV) to advertise her latest piece of soft porn, *Hollywood Wives*. Jackie knows all about the main chance. Her books ejaculate on average every 7½ minutes, forestalling the drowsiness brought on by the intervening passages, until the moment they fall asleep in their own sperm. In person, she is value for money and splendidly snooty about those Hollywood wives, tacky accessories to the ill-gotten cash of their owners: 'A broken nail will spoil their morning. A jeweller knows when a divorce is coming up because they always stock up on gems like hibernating squirrels.' Books like this should advertise themselves as 'the unabridged version of the chat-show'.

I suppose Ms Collins seems English in California. Here she looked like your average West Coast perm-a-tan divorcée beside spiky punkette Pamela Stephenson, who was wearing a mallet on her head. Jackie, though cute, was there to flog something dull. Pamela, cuter, upstaged and out-Englished her by being Australian and seeming to be there for fun, unless she was trying to sell us her new baby: 'I'd read about sterilising everything, so before I fed her I boiled my nipples.' Tits, Ms Stephenson revealed, are called suckie-buttons in Australia. She seemed in danger of revealing more than this through the graces of a boat-topped poncho she was half wearing, half flourishing. When she was little, she told the dazzled Michael Aspel, she had a 'front bottie'. What had Michael had? Michael replied with care: 'A dickie.' At which the women, one blonde, one brunette, seized their main chance and asked him what he called it nowadays. 'Richard,' said Aspel.

I liked the way he dug straight into his third guest, studio-star Tony Curtis, asking him what it was like to be one of the last old-style studio creations. Curtis didn't care for this. 'I was my own creation,' he pouted. 'Ah, but they made you into a sex symbol,' said Aspel kindly, implying that he wasn't one naturally. 'No they didn't,' countered the symbol, 'that was my idea.'

A reformed doper and drunk, Curtis insisted he was a product of his own imagination, that we all were. But his enthusiasm for this kind of creativity ran foul of its own examples: 'You want to be beautiful, ugly, short, great,. go ahead . . .' I would like to have heard more about one of Curtis's more lasting contributions to Cinema, the Tony Curtis hair-style: how exactly it was constructed, supported and what for. But Tony had had enough of that stuff from the critics: 'Critics don't know nuthin',' he mused. 'Critics shouldn't have jobs. They shouldn't be paid $250 to criticise movies that cost millions of dollars to put together.' The financial side of his argument was obscure to non-Californians, but Curtis had had a bellyful. 'One critic said he'd just found a worse actor than Tony Curtis, Elvis Presley. I told him he wouldn't know a good actor if one sat on his face.' It was clearly a part Curtis himself would have liked to have auditioned for.

His memories of sitting round in full drag waiting for Marilyn Monroe to get out of bed were no more charitable. He gave us to understand that he had *known* Miss Monroe in their youth, but kissing her was like kissing Hitler. 'Billy Wilder told us, listen guys, you better get your lines right because the first time she gets hers right I'm gonna print it.'

ANOTHER vigorous book campaign chose **The Saturday Review** (BBC-2) to promote Quentin Crisp, an Englishman who has nothing but praise for America, though one suspects his reasons are less objective than he imagines: 'Americans want you to succeed in the hope you will drag them forward with you. The British want you to fail because they fear you will leave them behind.' The fact is that in a materialistic country like America failure, irony and death are highly unconstitutional, if not treasonable.

Crisp was allowed to have his own mini-programme set inside *The Saturday Review* and for it he contacted Tina Brown, now editor of *Vanity Fair*. When Ms Brown first came to the States she was told that the more English she sounded the more likely she was to be believed. She thought the knife cut two ways. 'If you're so smart, they think how come you aren't rich?' America had no memory, she said, and was hostile to the past. 'The greatest compliment you're paid is "That's so contemporary"!' She may be right, but America's past-less-ness is quite a new thing, dating from its various recently-lost wars and ideals, which has put an end to artistic innovation for the time being.

Boy George was another Crisp approvee, with his thirst-making slogan, 'Sex can never be as good as a cup of tea'. Can he be doing it right? Warming the pot, letting it stand and everything? At least one can be sure he's always 'Mum'.

Crisp's lettuce was looking distinctly crumpled by the time he appeared opposite Frank Bough on **Breakfast Time** (BBC-1) on Monday. They were an unlikely pair, suffering from a personality gap as wide as the Atlantic, particularly as Crisp appeared to be serious when he assured Frank that American TV was 'without a doubt' the best in the world.

Omnibus returned to BBC-1 with a sketch of musical director George Abbott, 96. Abbott is currently reviving one of his biggest Broadway hits, *On Your Toes*, which opened at the same London theatre in 1937. He showed us the parking lot in New York where the George Abbott Theatre had once stood. 'The Hilton motel bought it, knocked it down, then changed their mind.' It is a rare man who outlives the building that was named after him, but something well worth aiming for. □

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GLC funded, financially assisted by GLAA

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MUSIC
Andrew Clements

Part score

Almeida Festival
Almeida Theatre, until July 8

For a good many years the lack of a festival devoted to contemporary music was one of the serious weaknesses in British musical life. Despite the range of new music to be heard in London and the unrivalled number of first-rate ensembles specialising in it, there was no single event that could remotely be compared with the international festivals such as Royan (and more recently La Rochelle) and Donaueschingen, or with the energy and commitment of the Warsaw Autumn or the Hungarian New Music Studio.

The last few years, though, have seen a marked improvement. The Huddersfield Festival of Contemporary Music has grown from its modest beginnings within the music department of Huddersfield Polytechnic into a permanent and valuable fixture of ever increasing scope and ambition, while Adrian Jack's MusICA series each summer at the ICA, though it may lack the concentration and range of peripheral activities of a true festival, has a willingness to take chances and to introduce unknown composers to London audiences which gives a feeling of celebration and crusading zeal. Now along comes the Almeida Festival, running for more than three weeks and pre-emptively describing itself as 'An International Festival of Contemporary Music and Performance'.

There's no denying that by any standards the Almeida is offering a remarkably rich and enterprising survey of the 20th century, with its main strands conveniently separated into thematic weekends and series: a Satie celebration last Saturday and Sunday including his masterpiece *Socrate*, the whole of Cornelius Cardew's *Great Learning* spread across two five-hour concerts to end the festival in a week's time, a French series and a self-contained 'Russian Festival'. There have also already been two music-theatre presentations: a staged version of Birtwistle's *Down by the Greenwood Side* and a 'performance musical', *Mozart at Palm Springs*, commissioned by the Festival from the systems composer Orlando Gough. There is a nice blend also between home-grown performers and imported packages, with a fair scattering of unfamiliar names and not too many extravagant star bookings.

After paying due tribute, though, to the organisers for their energy and, certainly, persistence in managing to fund such an enterprise, doubts begin to form about the purpose of it all. So much has been crammed into the programme that the profile of the festival is hard to discern: even its general slant towards experimental music and performance is all but submerged. It may be that by striking out in all directions the Almeida hopes to bring in a wider audience than is usually attracted to contemporary music, yet I fear it may have overestimated the size of that potential audience in London and its capacity to consume new music at a time of year when there are already more than enough small-time festivals to go round and with the Proms and South Bank Summer Music less than a month away. The Almeida Theatre is available throughout the year and a shorter, more carefully designed programme during the winter months might provide a more valuable fixture and be able to offer a fairer reflection of the condition of contemporary music.

For if new-music festivals do nothing else, they should at least provide a point of repose and reflection, a chance to crystallise out trends and re-assess reputations. At present the Almeida appears stuck in the 1970s, still in love with the systems world of Steve Reich and Philip Glass (Gough's 'musical' proved to be an attempt at a Robert Wilson style confection with a blameless score that would have seemed unexceptional 15 years ago) and with the whole cadre of composers who stemmed from John Cage. Scanning the lists it's hard to find more than one programme which might give any idea of what else is happening in British music today, let alone what is going on elsewhere in the world. Huddersfield, for all its limitations of resources, does that far more effectively.

The most lavish programmes have been *Mozart at Palm Springs* and the Birtwistle 'dramatic pastoral', cleanly presented and pungently sung and played, but still coming over as one of the thinnest of its composer's major works. Had at least some of the money spent on either of those been directed towards a few concerts of music by young composers the whole shape of the festival might have been more useful and would have contained within itself the opportunity for development and renewal in future years. Since it has set its cap at the experimental/performance movement it's hard to see where the event goes in future years, except to serve up more of the same. Stagnation like that would be a shame, for there are too few organisations willing to put their resources on the line for contemporary music to let one of them drive itself into a cul de sac. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2828 **Set by E.O. Parrott**
Dylan Thomas's panoramic overview of Llareggub placed that fishing village firmly on the map. Would compers now release his shade on the Houses of Parliament, Broadcasting House, the White House, Whitehall, or any other current institution? Max. 125 words by 13 July.

No 2825 **Set by Margaret Rogers**
'A Policeman's Lot is not a Happy One' re-written for today.

Report **By Glancing Tom**
I don't know about the Boys in Blue, but I'll tell you one thing for sure: a *window cleaner*'s lot isn't totally hilarious. I'd just fought my way through the potted plants to get at the splashes of Mouton Rothschild and taramasalata on the glass (what on earth, might one ask, goes on round here?) when someone chucked me a pile of papers and asked me to pick a few out. Two hours later, all I can say is whoever devised the Force's public relations had better do a bit more thinking. And a tenner each to you — whoever you are.

When the British mining men have ceased a-mining
They believe they're free to travel where they choose,
And sometimes need restraining and confining
When they try to meet in groups and air their views;
And even some of our elected leaders
Seem to want to take their pleasures as they please —
But we soon sort out those dirty little bleeders
In our staunch defence of British liberties.

And when women dress like tramps to seek attention,
Subversively protesting against war,
We must cure them of the gross misapprehension
That such behaviour lies within the law.
Not to call a spade a nignog's pretty hard — it
Is known that coons are all involved in crime.
O, when Freedom's under threat we're there to guard it;
A policeman's lot means lots of overtime.

G.F.M.

When a darkie's not upsetting NF members,
By walking in the street with coal-black face,
His sense of fun, compassion and good humour
Make prejudice (I've none) a sad disgrace.
When a miner isn't stamping on a copper,
Or beating wives and kids of scabs for fun,
He's a taste for Sunday strippers, ale and whippets,
An appetite for life surpassed by none.
Oh, with difficulty biases we smother,
When Governmental duty's to be done,
We take one excessive pay rise with another,
Which is why a PC's lot's a happy one.

When a student's not inhaling marijuana,
Or comparing us with excrement and swine,
His capacity for ethical reflection,
Is just as deep and circumspect as mine.
Oh, with difficulty biases we smother . . . etc.

TIM HOPKINS

Don't forget us as we were, benign and jolly,
On the beat, proclaiming smartly, 'Evenin' all!',
Helping Mum across the zebra with her trolley,
Dealing firmly with a mods-and-rockers brawl;
Or the lads in Z-cars, hard-as-nails but *wholesome*,
Every tearaway at heart a mother's son,
As with screeching tyres and sirens they patrol some
Sleazy lot — is not their lot a happy one?

In the Orwell-year, while striving to stay human,
We've a feeling, from the things we have to do
(What with Thatcher, Brittan *and* Sir Kenneth Newman),
That the Lamp has turned a deeper shade of Blue;
Whether settling shoplifters with a pistol,
Or provoking queens in loos (our flies undone),
Or contusing miners' skulls, it's clear as crystal
A policeman's lot is *not* a happy one!

JIMMIE PEARSE

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FIRST PERSON

Bill Greenwell

Soft shoe hustle

I AM AN ESTATE AGENT. Call me Simpkins. Or, no, call me Mallow; Simpkins is old, has the tired jingle of respectability about it. Mallow is fresh, has a softer shuffle of consonants, offers you service of a more seductive sort. Simpkins was personal, pedantic; I am personable. Flexible. Here's my home number. No trouble.

You will not hear my tread as I pad purposefully over my pile in your direction. There is a modern shag settling beneath your heels; you hardly noticed it swishing up your thighs, did you sir?

Brisk I can be. Words will whizz through my lips and alight lightly on your lobes. They'll be in your inner ear before you can say, excuse me sir, while I answer the phone, business is busy, always, yes hello, be with you in a moment... moment... moment. Ages of the jiffy and the tick are no longer with us.

Shan't keep you waiting.

Rooms sir, yes, yes, oh like a flash, sir. We don't like to hang about here, sir, turnover, this is a very, this is a very, you've decorated this, looked after this property extremely well. *Eminently mortgageable*, that's the phrase we use, they're very fast on the market these — when, 1908? — turn of the century terraces, sir. Yes, *eminently*: we call this Exeter's Chelsea.

Now, down to business. Anything in particular you require? Rooms? Is that bedrooms? I used to have a house like yours, very pleasant indeed. And a bit of garden? Patio? They move very swiftly, sir, this type of property. Give me one of these, I can sell it before I'm out the door, very popular with young couples like yourselves — hello, and what's your name, they soon grow up, don't they? Mine was walking in no time. Is there a socket in that corner, thank you. Ooh, this should go in no time. Put in this way, I'll be very surprised if there isn't a lot of interest by the middle of next week. No, we can certainly shift these, there's no one shiftier than us with these little houses, did you have a particular price in mind, I thought about, carpets included?

Lived here long? Hello again! I bet he's a terror when he's let loose, eh? Used to drive my wife mad. I shouldn't include the carpets in the price sir, no, what it is, then you have a bit of leverage on the price, yes, it probably sounds a bit low, but it'll attract the business in. But no, let's be honest, if you want to go for the higher price, oh by all means. After all, it's your property, I'm only here to advise, no, if you don't mind hanging around. Are you on the phone? All main services connected? Good. Tell you what, if no one else wants it, I'll probably snap it up myself.

Commission? Oh very reasonable, let's say about nine-by-twelve for this room, left my tape measure in the car. Right, I'll just pop back to the office and I'll give you a ring this afternoon, I've got your number, haven't I?

Hello, Richard Mallow here, estate agent, we visited your property last Wednesday, yes. We thought, excuse me one moment sir, John can you get this other line, I've a client on the 'phone, you wanted to put it on the market at, what was it, yes, and not including the carpets, very sensible, sir. I mean to be quite frank with you, they're obviously going to want the carpets, so that should give us a bit of movement, you have my home number, yes, any time, always happy, in the paper tonight, did I say? No, our fault entirely, sir, the typist's been off sick and there's been a bit of a backlog.

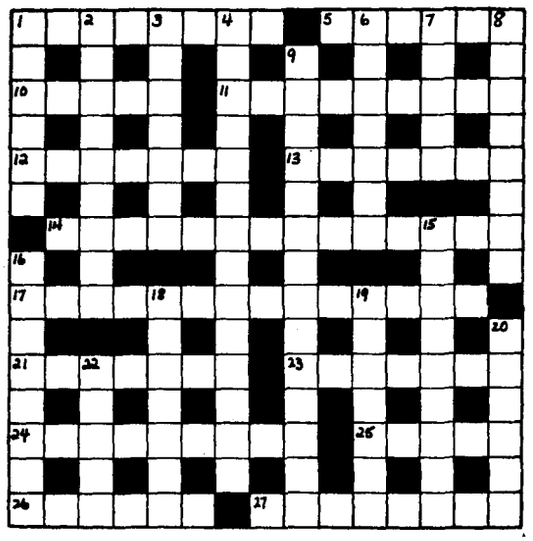
Commission? Oh just the usual, it was for sole agency, there's a 20 per cent discount on it, yes. Now if you haven't got a solicitor, I can recommend, you have, fine, fine.

Hello, with you in a minute, a minute, have a seat, you won't hear your bums thud down, just a sinking feeling, we like the customer to be comfortable, no plush but plenty of hush, yes, yes. Exactly how much commission? Well, how much are we offering your property for, sir, oh that'll be about, about, yes, that's right, all in.

Oh the VAT. Didn't I? And now we've completed the sale of your property, not a bad price these days, market's been slow, it's still slow, we can't shift them fast enough, what an upturn in the market there's been. Just the right time to sell. And I will try to slip an extra seven quid commission past your solicitor, because people never check, now, do they? □

Weekend Crossword 1445

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1445, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 10 July.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

ACROSS

1. To be embarrassed in a company feels bad (4,4)
5. Lowers intellectuals into the water backwards (6)
10. World theatre (5)
11. A way of writing and putting the Londoner's picnic container on the beach (9)
12. Torch which spoils secrets (7)
13. Ancient city in part of Africa is not man-made (7)
14. Painters of seascapes or woodcutters' companions (7,2,5)
17. Going to pieces because of changing diets in bars (14)
21. Sex and dope are material to be given publicity (7)
23. Being furthest from earth go back in a fur (7)
24. Coach industry (9)
25. Means of catching a girl with a ring (5)
26. One who makes a great sacrifice to get the comic right (6)
27. Footballers on the bottle! (8)

DOWN

1. What is left when there is a prison uprising inside (6)
2. Army command gives a fresh order to map loser (5,4)
3. Cutter used for converting the Far West (7)
4. Fellow reading the wrong title (7,7)
6. Writer who turns his arts into a weapon (7)
7. As a means of going up I get in the best player (5)
8. Craftsmen who sound as if they go ahead of Wells (8)
9. Setsquare, for example, goes without a trip in not reorganising a competition (4,10)
15. State for Williams (9)
16. If there were more than one such extra it would be dead and cut up (8)
18. Bouquet for one who wrote songs on the organ (7)
19. Bad woman whose head is about to turn (7)
20. Spies when clubs are returned (6)
22. The town has lost its doctor and so is less healthy looking (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1443

Prizewinners to 1443

Mrs S. Logan (Isle of Arran)
Mike Campbell (Oxford)
Harry Foreman (Wigston, Leics.)

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LISTINGS

THURS 28 JUNE

LONDON Public meeting of Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (London branch) 8pm County Hall, London, SE1.

FRI 29 JUNE

LONDON 'Shaw's Religion' Spkr. Barbara Smoker. 6.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Coffee. **Org. Shaw Society.**

SAT 30 JUNE

CAMDEN Labour Social Security Campaign Conf. 'What to do about the Fowler Benefit Reviews'. 10.30-4pm Camden Town Hall. Spkr. Michael Meacher.

LONDON 'One Struggle, One Fight' half-day workshop 1pm-6pm The Factory, Chippenham Mews, W9. **Org. National Campaign Against the Police Bill, 50 Rectory Rd, N16 7QY 01-249 8334.**

CAMDEN Chartist 100-up celebration meeting. Spkrs. John Palmer on Europe, Anne Phillips on Feminism and Labour, Paul Hoggett and Andrew Puddephatt on the 'Local State'. 1pm-5.30pm Camden Town Hall, Euston Rd, NW1. **Org. Chartist, 170 Wandsworth Rd, SW8 01-720 2328.**

ISLINGTON Latin-American/African/Caribbean Evening 7pm Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1. Bar, food. Adm £3/£1.50 unwaged at door. **Org. Jenako Arts, 49 Balls Pond Rd, N1 4BW 01-249 6067.**

EAST BARNET 'World & Peace Studies in a Free Society' day-conf. Spkrs. incl. Rev. Fredrick George, Clarry Goodchild. 10am-5pm at East Barnet Church. £2.50 incl lunch, creche. **Details: 01-441 0792.**

LONDON Short Life Housing Conf. 8.30am-4.30pm Thomas Coram Fdn. 40 Brunswick Sq, WC1. Lunch/creche. £4/£1.50 unwaged. **Details: Mary Evans, HEO Empty Property Unit, 157 Waterloo Rd, SE1.**

WOLVERHAMPTON 'The Need for a Christian Opposition' Spkrs. Peter Archer MP, David Haslam. 7pm East Park Methodist Church, Brooklands Parade. **Details: Alan Harvey 0902 342778.**

LONDON Holistic Health Symposium 9.30am Westminster Cathedral Conf. Centre, Morpeth Terr, SW1. **Tickets £2 Vegetarian Society, 53 Marloes Rd, W8. 01-937 1714.**

OXFORD Solidarity with Irish Workers — Day School for Trade Unionists 10am Co-op Hall, Cowley Road. Creche/Cold Lunch. £1.50 orgs/£1 individual. **Details: Oxford Labour Cttee. on Ireland, 8 Divinity Rd.**

PILGRIMS' WAY (Wye to Canterbury) Walk to raise funds for Battersea Arts Centre. **Details: Diana Warden, Friends of BAC 01-223 6557/8/9.**

LONDON '1984 — A Celebration of Women'. Review Our Past. Write Our Future, NCCL Women's Rights Conf. City University. Spkrs incl Dora Russell, Pratibha Parmar, Bea Campbell. **Send s.a.e. to NCCL, 21 Tabard St, SE1 4LA for info.**

LONDON Jumble Sale. 2pm onwards. Edison Community Centre, Edison Rd, Crouch End, N8. Clothes, books, records, toys, etc. Admission 5p. **Org Hornsey CND.**

SUN 1 JULY

KILBURN Miners' Wives Benefit at The Tricyle Theatre, 269 Kilburn High Rd, NW6. Performers: Jenny Lecoat, music from Out Bar Squeek. **Details: Brent Miners' Wives Support Grp, 1 Lynton Rd, NW6.**

BATTERSEA PARK Battersea & Wandsworth Trades Union Council Annual Summer Festival 12 noon-8pm. Details and Action Pack available from BWTUC, 248 Lavender Hill, SW11. 01-228 1163. **Information on Festival: Melvin Benn h. 228 9154/w 633 4362/3.**

NOTTINGHAM Mass Trespass at Chilwell Ordnance Depot — 103rd US base. **Details: Reclaim Chilwell, c/o Nottingham CND, Environmental Factshop, 15 Goosegate, Nottingham NG1 1FE. 0602 581948.**

MON 2 JULY

ILFORD Fall-out Theatre presents 'The Galaxy's Guide to Survival' at 8pm Friends' Meeting House, corner Albert Rd/Cleveland Rd. Adm free. **Org Ilford CND.**

PUTNEY William Morris memorial debate between Jonathan Porritt, Ecology Party and Peter Hain of Labour Party 'Greens and Socialism'. 8pm Fox & Hounds (nr. corner Upper Richmond Rd/Putney High St. SW15. **Org. Putney Labour Party 01-788 8961.**

CLERKENWELL Festival begins for whole week. **Details: Jim Langden, Brighter Islington Campaign, Planning Dept, 227 Essex Rd, N1. Anthony Weaver Clerkenwell Heritage Centre, 33 St John's Sq, EC1.**

TUES 3 JULY

HAMPSTEAD 'Rate capping and the arts in Camden' public discn. forum 7.30pm Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, NW3. Spkrs. incl. Tony Banks MP, Michael Attenborough, director Hampstead Theatre, Adm Free. **Details: Anna Barfield, Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Rd, NW3. 01-435 2643/5224.**

THURS 5 JULY

MUSWELL HILL 'The State of the Arms Talks' Spkr. Malcolm Harper, Director of United Nations Assoc. Adm. free. 8pm Tetherdown Hall, Tetherdown, N10. **Details: Muswell Hill CND Jane Morley 889 0571.**

SAT 7 JULY

MANCHESTER 2-day conf of Socialist Economists 'Confronting Capitalism'. Creche (book in advance) papers, food, entertainment, accommo. **Details: Phil Blackburn for CSE Conf. Cttee. 152 Kennington Park Rd, SE11 4DJ. 01-633 1227.**

BIRMINGHAM Festival for Peace 2-8pm Small Health Park. **Org. Birmingham CND 54 Allison St, Digbeth, Birmingham 5. 021 632 6909.**

FORTHCOMING

8-12 JULY BARNSLEY CND National Summer School at Northern College. **Details/registration: 01-263 9698/Barnsley 85426.**

11 JULY STOKE NEWINGTON 'Police in Schools' public meeting + discn. called by Roach Family Support Cttee, Stoke Newington School, Hackney Campaign against the Police Bill, Hackney Teachers Assoc. 7.30pm Stoke Newington School, Clissold Rd, N16. **Details: Maurice 01-533 0216.**

20-22 JULY LEEDS AGM of PEN 'Peace Education Network' at Beechwood College. **Details: Stephanie Duczek, York Peace Community, 15a Clifford St, York, YO1 1RG.**

27-29 JULY NOTTINGHAM Shelter Annual Housing Conference University of Nottingham. **Details: Tim Mars, Shelter, 157 Waterloo Rd, SE1 8FX. 01-633 9377.**

28 JULY-5 AUGUST LONDON to BARROW IN FURNESS sponsored bike ride for Peace. Start 10.30am from Jubilee Gdns. **Details and sponsor forms from Moira Weaver, Dulwich CND, 29 Elsie Rd, E. Dulwich, SE22.**

12 AUG-28 AUG 'Travel to Nicaragua' tour of country, meetings with different mass organisations and Government. See firsthand the gains of the revolution. **Org. New Socialist/Progressive Tours, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1. 01-226 6747.**

12-14 SEPT BRADFORD 'Peace Studies in Higher Education' Conf. org. for those who wish to write/speak on their experience of Peace Studies teaching and research and those who wish to learn. **Contact: James O'Connell, School of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, W. Yorkshire 0274 733455.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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GROUPS/ MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme. Informal Question/Answer Meeting. 'The Bhagavad-Gita as Yoga'. Sun. 1 July 8 p.m. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

INSTITUTE OF TRANS-LOGICAL THINKING
Thurs. eves July/August. Groups by:
R.D. LAING, HELEN DAVIS
Advanced group dynamics
SIMON MEYERSON or PROF. ALBERTO SINGLESTONE
Programme: 01-794 2354

TUITION

DRAWING, PAINTING, PRINTMAKING, ART HISTORY, YOGA fortnights: rustic *hacienda*: July-September. Arts & Growth Centre, Canillas de Albaida (Malaga) SPAIN. 01-278 4411 ext. 200.

GURDJIEFF/OUSPENSKY CENTRE ACCEPTING STUDENTS NOW. Tel: Chorley Wood 4792.

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Full details and prospectus from: **David Rundle, The Director, The British Institute, Lungarno Guicciardini 9, FLORENCE, Italy.**
Tel: 010-39 55 284 031.

WORKSHOP

HYPNOSIS AND HUMAN Potential Workshop by Professor Steven Lynn. Instruction in hypnotic and self-hypnotic techniques to help one cope with smoking, alcohol, pain, and stress. 7 July, 10-6 p.m. at The College of Psychic Studies. 16 Queensberry Place, London SW7. For further details phone 01-589 3292. Fee £12 (Students £10).

SOCIETIES

NINE MEN'S MORRIS. *Will anyone who* regularly plays this fascinating board game kindly contact T. A. Layton, *founder of the* 9MM Society, 3 Sussex Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 2WD.

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ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL man (58), loves arts, seeks attractive, sensual non-smoking woman, slim/medium (any age to 53), any race/circumstances for warm friendship/enjoyments. Pref. London/surrounding areas. Box 8725.

ALLURING WOMAN, 34, witty, intelligent, enjoys 'good things in life'; would like to share theatre, wining, dining, arts etc., with sophisticated, professional man, 35+. Box 8722.

BUSINESS GENTLEMAN, semi-retired, widower, 60, lonely, offers lady (similar position) partnership in profitable business going concern. No capital outlay required. Easy run from own home. In return for accommodation/office, situated South Coast or Channel Islands. Highest references all legal. Write in confidence for particulars Box 8726.

CHARMING, ATTRACTIVE woman, auburn, not slim, seeks personable, tolerant male companion, for permanent relationship, marriage possible. 60-70 age group. Box 8712.

COMPANY DIRECTOR, 44, middle-brow, Asian, public school educated but no Tory, divorced, seeks slim, thoughtful, liberal, humorous, non-smoking, educated, sensuous, cultivated lady, 25/35. Into cinema, theatre, current affairs, tennis, scrabble etc. Box 8692.

COSMOPOLITAN ENGLISHWOMAN, mid 50s, attractive, possessing charm, humour, a love of life, seeks counterpart companion who would appreciate an affectionate sharing relationship. Intelligence and education important. Integrity, generosity, flexibility more so. Humour above all. London/Sussex. Box 8672.

CREATIVE, LIVELY, intelligent, happy, arts-oriented, Leeds-based woman 30s; interested art, music, politics; likes 'Bopping', seeks lively, interesting male friends, (28-42-ish). Box 8655.

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EAST LONDON male, 29, is seeking intelligent, independent, irreligious, unmaterialistic, humorous, leftish female. Interested in politics, peace, films, some sports and most music. Box 8684.

ENGLISHMAN 44, slim, fit, own business, happy, affectionate and discreet, has occasional free days, to develop a caring relationship, with an interesting lady. Please be daring and answer, I promise to reply. Box 8697.

FACETED FEMININE female, beachcombing sea urchin, book addict, intellectual interests, erotic inclinations, seeks unattached, smokefree, professional, masculine male, 45-55, for enjoyable mutual sharing. Box 8710.

FRIENDSHIP WITH (ideally)
professional man, 53 plus, widower/divorced, a sensitive, caring person, would be welcomed by attractive, intelligent woman, late forties.
Box 8698

FUN-LOVING extrovert 25 year-old female, seeks stable guy 26+ who loves life. And let's see what happens. North West & Greater Manchester area. Box 8717.

GAY SOCIALIST, tall, slim, looks OK, seeks male relationship (over 21). Letter with photo please. Box 8680.

GAY WOMAN (40), seeks similar (age immaterial), for correspondence/friendship. South-East England or London area. Box 8708.

HOLIDAY COMPANION, preferably female, sought by early 30s, partially sighted, left-wing bloke, 2/3 weeks abroad July or August. Any offers, suggestions? Box 8721.

IF YOU ARE FEMALE, any age or creed, seeking a man to complement your life as a partner should, wining, dining, caring and sharing, reply to this London-based male, 38. Box 8718.

INTELLIGENT, CARING, attractive professional London woman, mid-40s, good sense of humour, seeks man share arts, cinema, travel, wining, dining. Sense humour & sensitivity essential. Box 8619.

LADY, 54, London, interested music, sport, arts, people, sharing seeks genuine Jewish man, preferably tall, similar interests, for lasting relationship. Box 8693.

LADY, EARLY fifties, own home Chelsea, artistic background; quiet, understanding, practical — seeking sincere companionship of good-natured, creative gentleman, own interests, similar age, living London. Box 8723.

LADY WOULD like to meet gentleman, 60+. Independent friendship. Box 8666

LECTURER, FEMALE, 42, socialist, wide interests in this country and abroad, seeks warm, non-chauvinist m., for friendship. South Manchester area. Box 8709.

LIVELY, LOVING, lonely lady, widow 62, own home, Home Counties, no ties. Longs for lasting relationship with sensitive, caring gentleman. Box 8734.

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LEEDS: MALE graduate, 22, few interests, liberal, lonely; seeks affectionate, feminine, erotic, intellectual female, with sense of fun to care and be cared for. Box 8706.

MALE TEACHER (36), non-smoker, unmarried, interests: films, theatre, rambling, food and wine seeks female friend with similar interests and preferably left views. N. Yorkshire/Cleveland but can travel further. Photo appreciated, but not essential. Box 8707.

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PROFESSIONAL ASIAN male, 40, in open marriage situation seeks relationship. Interests: novels, travel, writing. Planning travel to India in August. London based. Box 8737.

PROFESSIONAL AUTHOR (non-fiction); sixty; divorced; living WC1; seeks lasting relationship with sincere London woman (early fifties?). Exchange photographs: then telephone talks, meetings. He is healthy, considerate, honest, loyal. Box 8724.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 33, unattached, loves theatre, music, films, walking, wine, eating out, seeks humorous, like-minded female to share these pleasures. Liverpool/Manchester or nearby. Box 8694.

CUDDLY, UNEMPLOYED graduate, 25, seeks faithful, innocent Torvill look-a-like or 'uneducated Rita', 16 plus, non-smoker nutcase to tame, bewitch rebellious Irishman. Photo. South London. Box 8732.

SENSITIVE, THOUGHTFUL, but basically cheerful man, 29, not unattractive, would like to find friendly, caring woman for love and affection. London but will travel. Box 8720.

SHEFFIELD/LEEDS area. Single leftish male, 29, varied interests, seeks warm and caring female, with view to building a lasting relationship. Box 8705.

WELL EDUCATED male, 25, 5'6", fair looking, shy, sensitive, seeks mature female to share literary interests and life. Age, looks, race, area unimportant. Box 8704.

WOMAN, STILL attractive and lively-minded despite being in fifties, slightly disabled, separated, lonely, and missing joys of life with loving man, despairing of finding special relationship again, will settle for wider circle of friends. Anyone in South London similarly placed, interested in forming social group to visit theatres, concerts, restaurants, etc? Box 8696.

YORKSHIRE: ATTRACTIVE, intelligent woman (32), interests: arts, food, wine, etc., seeks man possessing the usual NS qualities, willing to participate in mutually rewarding relationship. Box 8695.

HOLIDAYS/ TRAVEL

CENTRAL BRIGHTON close sea, charmingly renovated early Victorian Terrace, available four weeks 4-31 August. £120 per week. Tel. (0273) 605315.

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